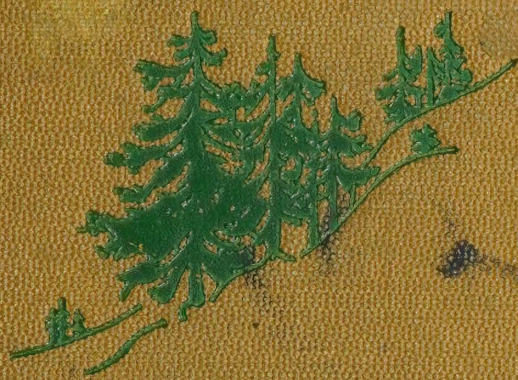


GO NORTH, YOUNG MAN!



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GO NORTH, YOUNG MAN!

By Courtney Ryley Cooper

UNDER THE BIG TOP

LIONS 'N' TIGERS 'N' EVERYTHING

HIGH COUNTRY

OKLAHOMA

THE GOLDEN BUBBLE

THE CHALLENGE OF THE BUSH

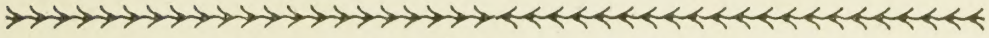


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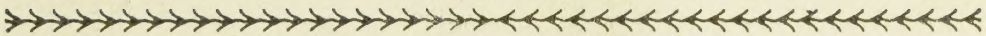
A MINING CAMP WITH THE BURNING
BUSH IN THE DISTANCE

GO NORTH, YOUNG MAN!



BY COURTNEY RYLEY COOPER

ILLUSTRATED



TORONTO
McCLELLAND AND STEWART

1929

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~~LOCKE ST. BRANCH~~

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IT IS ONLY APPROPRIATE THAT
THIS CHRONICLE OF A LAST FRONTIER
SHOULD BE DEDICATED TO THAT
MAN WHO HAS EARNED FOR HIMSELF THE TITLE:

JOHN E. HAMMELL
KING OF THE GOLDEN NORTH

FOREWORD

It is an easy thing to compare, by a play upon words, a dramatic event of the present with a dramatic event of the past. The reference is to the title of this volume, which, is, of course, an adaptation of that famous advice of Horace Greeley: "Go West, Young Man."

However, it happens that my home is within a quarter of a mile of the monument which stands to the memory of the man whose pioneering prompted this advice, — George A. Jackson, who, by the discovery of gold at that place, now the junction of Chicago and Clear creeks, near Idaho Springs, Colorado, started the great rush for gold across the plains in 1859. Ten miles away are the gold camps of Central City, of Nevadaville and Russell Gulch, which Greeley visited upon the tour that gave rise to his statement. I know the people there, the old-timers, the pioneers; I have heard from their lips the stories of those olden days.

My father, for a brief time at least, was a rider

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of the Pony Express in the West. It has been my privilege to be the friend and associate of such empire builders as General Nelson A. Miles, General Frank Baldwin, William Frederick Cody (Buffalo Bill), and that grand old pioneer, Mike Russell, of Deadwood. From them and from their friends, I have heard the story of the West in its burning, its trials, its hardships, its difficulties; I have also heard the story of the rewards which came to those young men who faced danger and difficulty in answer to Horace Greeley's advice: "Go West, Young Man." To-day, where once there was hardship, there is now comfort; cities and fortunes and happiness are monuments to the pioneering spirit which answered a call of more than half a century ago.

Therefore, in paraphrasing an old bit of advice, I do so with the background of knowing all that advice stood for: the dangers, the hunger for human companionship, the disappointments, the heart-aches which necessarily ensued before there was the final apportionment of success.

Horace Greeley issued his advice concerning the West to young men only. The same advice is herewith repeated regarding the North. For there the

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same conditions, the same hardships, the same weird adventures and terrific battles against an unknown and vicious country exist that pertained to the West in the early sixties. It is not a country for the old man who cannot wait for the years to go by with but little progress toward fruition. It is not the country for the weakling, nor for him who does not have the true spirit of the adventurer and the fighter in his soul. It calls for hardy men, strong men, in heart, in mind, in body.

For him who has this, the North promises great rewards, won over a period of servitude. Young men are scarce; the old cry is renewed that this generation is a generation of parasites, not willing to fight for fortune. But against that are many exceptions, gritty young fellows with little to gain for the moment and much to gain over a period of years, young fellows who are willing to battle the frontier and beat it.

For the weakling, this book has nothing.

For him with the spirit of the pioneer in his soul, I repeat:

GO NORTH, YOUNG MAN!

COURTNEY RYLEY COOPER

GO NORTH, YOUNG MAN!

CHAPTER I

A few months ago I went back to a place in the New North of Canada which held many memories. Not old memories, however, for the time of my previous visit had been only three years before. Then, with our packs on our backs, my trial partner, Jack Nankervis, and myself had "hit the bush" in an effort to get to a new mining camp, that of Rouyn, in northwestern Quebec.

It had been somewhat of a job to learn just how to get in there. Of course, we could take the airplane, some one said, but nobody in Toronto, where we had started, knew where the airplane ran from. Then there was a boat which ran from somewhere too, but that somewhere wasn't clear. After a time it was decided that the best route would be to go to Taschereau, on the transcontinental line of the Canadian National Railways, and follow the grading and survey stakes of the branch line which was building into the new, raw town.

So we went to Taschereau, and we rode out on

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the new line as far as it went, a distance of ten miles. Then, sometimes on right of way, sometimes in muskeg, sometimes sleeping at the camps of railroad engineers and sometimes not, we headed for Rouyn, fifty miles or five days away. Once we had a lift in a canoe. Once, too, we got lost — and it rained all that night. Throughout the five days, our shoulders bent beneath our heavy packs, the black flies and the mosquitoes swarming out of the soggy muskeg to feast upon us, the trail sometimes a “tote road” and sometimes nothing at all, we moved onward, through the black, dense bush of the Canadian North, yielding stubbornly, grudgingly to the advance of civilization. We had a fishing rod along, and in that journey we laid a trout fly on waters that never before had seen a Royal Coachman or a Yellow-bodied Gray Hackle. Finally, fly-bitten, muskeg-soiled, we arrived at a little collection of log cabins, where the life rafts lay in the bend of Lake Osisko, in case the bush should blaze into all-consuming fire some night, and where a black shaft-house on the hill denoted a mine that some day might amount to something.

It was the kind of a town that one sees mostly in motion pictures. The cabins were set crazily where

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pioneers had decided to place them. Prospectors roamed about, talking grandly, and perfectly willing to accept a free meal. The bush clung, black and menacing on every side; it was a frontier town, with its population living upon hopes and upon each other. Bootleggers, Ladies of the Golden Chance, tinhorn card sharps, — one found them frequently. Our abode was a cot room, together with eight other men, and that was the nicest place in town.

So, as I say, a few months ago, I went back to Rouyn. This time, the railroad ticket seller in Winnipeg knew just how I would get there, and at Taschereau I simply changed from one Pullman to another. Along the right of way where Jack and I had tramped, roofless buildings now showed themselves, as of long deserted pioneering; they were the engineers' camps where we had slept three years before. The train stopped often, at little settlements. In two hours, I was in Rouyn.

A two-thousand-ton smelter stood where Jack and I had wallowed through the muskeg on the last leg of our journey. Along the lake where the life rafts had been was the town of Noranda, with apartment houses, a fifty-room hotel, building and

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fire restrictions, and a society set, already long enough established to find things to say about the society set of Rouyn, a mile away. There were water mains and sewage, a fire department, the usual civic organizations. A dozen chugging taxicabs met the train, and busses, clamoring the comforts of the hotel in Noranda and the four or more in Rouyn. That night I took a walk. At last, I found, as if it had been laid away for reference, a tiny group of log buildings, all that remained of the Rouyn I had known. And the next day I went back to Toronto. By the same railroad? Not at all. I took a through drawing-room on the Temiskaming and Northern Ontario line — the connection of which had not even been started on my previous visit!

A swift transition, such as the one just described, demands an explanation, regarding both the achievement and its causes. Especially since this North Country should be old in the eyes of the mine enthusiast by this time. It has been about a quarter of a century since the name of Cobalt flared before the eyes of those who like to read of newly discovered riches, nearly twenty since one of the great gold mines of the world came into existence in the Porcupine district, near the eastern edge of the Province

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of Ontario and some five hundred miles north of Toronto.

The fever ran high then — that excessive temperature which goes with the lure of new money. Now the fever has come again, extending almost to the very edge of a previous spot of infection, and more inflamed than ever. A rush for new money usually has its limitations; that it should be getting its growth only twenty-odd years after the first outbreak is rather remarkable. But the fact remains that the excitement of new money is as fervent to-day in Canada as it was even back in those days when the name of Cobalt became synonymous with silver, and the sour-doughs of the Klondike, their first flush gone, turned from the Western North to the Eastern North in hopes of new riches.

Then, however, the search was confined to a district of a comparatively few square miles. To-day, one can look for a prospector at almost any spot throughout a stretch of land that has increased ten thousandfold. But one cannot always find him, even though he be present in numerous quantities. In fact, one who does not know mining might travel great distances in Canada these days, searching vainly for Canada's gold rush. When one deals

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with two million square miles of muskeg, of forest so thick that the inexperienced can easily become lost within a quarter of a mile of a railroad, where country is so wild and virginal that the native speaks of sneaking upon a feeding moose and, with a leap from his canoe, riding him bareback with the same casual manner that a cow-puncher would refer to the breaking of a bronco; where prospectors travel by canoe and portage as far as two hundred miles from the nearest settlement in the task of looking over some fabled schist, while five hundred miles away other prospectors are traveling a hundred and eighty miles in another direction with a moose skin for a shaft bucket and their packs on their backs that they may peel the soil from a hopeful vein — such scenes as the customary pictures of a gold rush are rather hard to assemble. Add to this a picture of airplanes which are invading the wilderness, even to the Arctic Circle, and you have a scope of mining interest as big as the Dominion.

All this in a country where there are thousands upon thousands of square miles yet to be explored, where accurate mapping is being done for the first time by means of airplane, where the moose walks grudgingly away from his feeding among the ten-

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der lily stalks of a river bed at the interruption of a human being, and where lakes are often named for the first time by the prospector who remembers the appellation when he gets back to civilization.

That needs explanation. Everything seems to be fringed with questions when one blandly attempts to describe the North Country and explain in a few words why a gold rush should exist there. When one talks about the West — Canadian or American — one can call it new and let it go at that. But when one uses the term in reference to some of the supposedly oldest portions of Canada, where Wolfe fought and where Radisson and Groseilliers formed a sort of Lewis and Clark for the Company of Adventurers, otherwise the Hudson's Bay Company — when one attempts with a sweep of his hand to dust off the mold and keep his face straight when he calls that country new, he has a job on his hands. Yet new it is, with great districts where the prospector, lured on by the hope of gold, is setting foot on virgin territory, ninety per cent. of which has not yet even been scratched, and where a man's life is in his own hands, once he takes to the bush for the riches which may be concealed there.

The reason for that newness is, after all, simple.

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When settlement came to Canada it sought the most accessible points. Those were contained in a comparatively narrow strip of land adjacent to the northern boundary of the United States. Ontario, for instance, the greatest ore producer, is a province slightly larger than the British Isles. Of its total population, practically all reside in the southern district encompassed by seventy-seven thousand square miles. That leaves practically three hundred and thirty-three thousand square miles of wilderness and rivers and lakes for the woodcutter, the timber cruiser, the scattered camps of the pulp-paper manufacturer, the Hudson's Bay factor at his outpost, the Indian in search of pelts, the prospectors in pursuit of new money. The same is true of all other mineral provinces of Canada, and since all seem to possess metal in some form, the description therefore assumes a relation to everything Canadian.

Ontario remains a typical case in another way. It has been only thirty-eight years, for instance, since the province thought enough of grubbing money from the ground to establish a Bureau of Mines, forty-two years after the California rush, thirty-two after the days when covered wagons conquered the Great American Desert in the hegira to

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the new diggings near Denver. It was not until about 1908 that gold was really discovered in the true sense of the word in this new land of the Eastern North. Since that time, Ontario has disgorged nearly a billion dollars in minerals.

This vague land beyond the seventy-seven thousand square miles of Ontario's populated area, and like districts in Quebec, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Alberta and British Columbia — other provinces must be excepted as a rush territory in spite of their heavy mineral production — is just now really being explored. Strange? Yes, to one who never has stood face to face with the terrific impenetrability of the bush. Not at all strange when reference is again made to the fact that great areas of country are only now submitting to mapping and geological survey, thereby, with every report of the formations existent, bringing a new interest on the part of those who prefer to search for gold where gold may be, instead of merely wandering in a country where, to the uninitiated, everything looks alike, but which may be as different under the soil as Timbuktú and South Bend, Indiana.

One likes to think of the search for precious metals as a thing of mountains, with red-shirted

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miners kneeling beside bubbling streams, and there, in their slowly shifting gold pans, rocking forth the nuggets that become money just as soon as they appear in the last residue of black sand at the bottom of the pan; or of pack jacks winding over the rugged mountains, their panniers loaded with high-grade, precious ore, while bandits lie in wait in the next gulch, long revolvers drawn and tense for the moment when they will leap forth and seize their riches.

New money, it is popularly supposed, comes just that way. It is fast money, with pouches of gold dust, and bartenders weighing the nuggets presented for the purchase of drinks, with transparent streams revealing the gleaming nuggets that lie in their bed. Such is the picture that is ever present in the mind of the ordinary person who has formed dreams of gold mining, simply because those were the conditions which sent the covered wagons across the plains to Sutter's Mill in California in '49. That was the sort of thing which caused thousands of men to tramp away the weary miles to Colorado ten years later. It was gold at the grass roots which caused the long lines of tramping mushers into the Klondike, beginning in 1896; but up in the bush —

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the vernacular for Canadian wilderness — all is different.

Once upon a time, there was a great range of mountains, estimated by some to be as high as the Rockies, which ran south from the Arctic Circle and, when it reached Eastern Manitoba and Ontario, swooped down almost to Lake Superior before it took a notion to go back north again; which it did, with various twistings and writhings, until it passed out of the picture up Labrador way, once more back home in the Arctic Circle.

According to the geologists, it was a king of mountain ranges, having had its grand volcanic outburst upon an already overheated world some fifty million years before the Rocky Mountains even got started, making the Rockies, with their ten million years or so of active occupation, a sort of sixth generation as mountains go.

Sixty million years is a long time. Much can happen in an interval like that. It did. There were eruptions and more eruptions. Then there was tropical temperature where now there are Eskimos and fur parkas. Following this, by way of diversion, there were glaciers and ice fields and more glaciers and more erosions, with the result that now, in the north

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of Canada, that once massive chain of mountains amounts to just about enough to form a watershed, separating the waters which flow into Hudson's Bay from those that naturally have an inclination to flow toward the Gulf of Mexico. It isn't even a mountain range any more; it's a height of land. Thirty thousand years ago it wasn't even that — it was merely a good floor for what was known as the Continental Glacier, which in time passed into history. That left the same kind of condition which would exist if a giant knife should slice off the Rocky Mountains to a point about a thousand feet above sea level, leaving all its "innards" exposed.

Prospecting for gold would have been easy at that time. Here was displayed everything that the world had inside it at the time it was formed, for the rock which was laid bare was what was known as Pre-Cambrian, which dates back a long time before the first dinosaur tried out his teeth. Everything was scraped off. One finds to-day, on revealed spaces, the gougings and scratches of glacial action; not a tree, not a bit of soil was there to mar the view; all that would have been necessary for a prospector would be for him to choose what he wanted.

This Pre-Cambrian was money rock. For in-

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stance, it was in this Pre-Cambrian formation that the great copper deposits of North Michigan were found; the Witwatersrand and Ventersdorp and Potchefstroom gold beds and veins of the Transvaal



Key map of North America showing the Pre-Cambrian shield (in black). More than 1,800,000 square miles of Canada's surface lies under this shield, much of it now being prospected for the first time.

in Africa, as well as metal-bearing districts of China, Brazil and India, are, if not the same age, at least closely allied. The only trouble was that

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there were no prospectors to look the district over.

Therefore came the day, in movie parlance, thirty thousand years later, when investigation was not so easy. Blades of grass had grown in the sediment of crevices and decayed to form the basis for more blades. Then shrubs and trees followed, all feeding upon the remains of those that had gone before. In places this deposit took the form of muskeg, a conglomeration of mushy roots, decayed vegetation and general devilment, stretching for miles, and in places almost bottomless. In others the rocks were buried for no more than a few feet. But practically everywhere there was vegetation in the form of thick forests, growing down to the rocks, then spreading their roots like tremendous fans throughout the makeshift soil of former growths — bogs, muskeg stretches, swamps — and where there were no forests or swamps or muskeg, there were innumerable lakes and rivers. In the midst of all this, built upon sedimentation probably left by the glaciers, was a clay belt which beckoned to the farming pioneer.

This has its bearing. In that Great Clay Belt today the barns are bigger than the houses and the sweet clover knee-deep; there a sturdy French-Canadian people of thirty years ago struggled for

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existence as the pioneers of America struggled a century before them. There were forests to be conquered. There were dangers and hardships. One sees, even to-day, the tiny burial plot at the side of a log home, and crosses standing black and unpainted — because that little house in the clearing represented all there was in life or in death. One hears but little of this Great Clay Belt; farming is not romantic. Yet because of it Cobalt was discovered, and Cobalt's name is known around the world.

The French-Canadian pioneer had been successful in the Great Clay Belt except for a means by which to market his produce. There was only one thing to do, and the Ontario Government had started it — to build a railroad called the Temiskaming and Northern Ontario, to reach this clay belt of perhaps fifty miles in width and carry its produce to market.

So northward the railroad went out of North Bay, at last to reach a great cut through the rounded ugly rocks of the Pre-Cambrian, some four hundred miles or so north of Toronto. A camp was necessary, and a blacksmith shop to sharpen drill steel. A man named La Rose was one of the blacksmiths, and one fine day in 1903 he threw a hammer.

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Up Cobalt way, if one desires to start an argument, all one must do is to select a group of old-timers and ask why La Rose threw the hammer. One will tell you he threw it at a fox. Another will announce vociferously that the object was a chicken. A third will say that there was neither fox nor chicken, but that he threw the hammer from sheer exuberance. After that a fourth will contend that La Rose didn't discover Cobalt at all, but that two other men, James McKinley and Ernest Darragh, made, in quite a prosaic way, the find which to date has sent forth from one camp alone nearly a half billion ounces of silver.

However, it's better to feel that La Rose threw a hammer at a fox, and in doing so, knocked a piece of niccolite from a near-by stone, leading to the discovery of silver. Mining never suffered yet from a romantic story. Certainly, fox or no fox, it led to plenty of excitement — especially when there were deposits, placed by glacial action, which yielded from ten thousand to twelve thousand ounces of silver to the ton, merely awaiting discovery. There was a rush which resulted in some big mining and in something else. It grew a hardy type of prospector, educated him to the queer formations of Northern

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Canada and paved the way for the excitement of to-day. As for other discoveries it did not accomplish miracles, as far as a general expansion over all of the Northland's metal-bearing territory was concerned. Prospectors are a queer lot; they like to remain in the vicinity of the place where some one else has found riches, with the result that it was years before the Porcupine district was even discovered, a country that is comparatively only a short distance — in this land of tremendous expanses, at least — from Cobalt.

But the thrill of new money was present; gradually and very slowly those Canadian prospectors — and they are different from the ordinary run — spread fanwise. More camps were exploited. Then came the war.

While that war lasted everything stopped that Canada might give of its men and its substance with a free spirit of sacrifice that will forever stand as a spiritual monument to her greatness. Then, a few years after the war was over, there drifted to the outside world the news of Rouyn.

Ed Horne was the name of the prospector who had fought his way through the muskeg and bush into what is now the Rouyn territory, practically

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due east of Porcupine. Evidently his findings in the beginning were promising, for he kept at it, leaving the territory time after time, but always returning. At last, in 1920, he found what he sought and staked ground.

That's about the easiest thing one can do in Canada. The real thing is to interest capital into traveling long miles into the wilderness and spending a million dollars or so in the hope of establishing a profitable mine.

But Horne accomplished his object. An engineer accompanied him in September, 1922. The fact may or may not have become known. But almost coincidentally, other prospectors went into the country and staked claims, while still other capitalists seemed ready to option the ground. It started a boom and a staking bee which has been described as a puny replica of the Klondike. At last, in 1924 and 1925, it started a town.

Providence seems to provide munificently when it comes to the starting of a new mining camp. What had been a place of three or four log cabins grew to a score of such abodes. Then the score became fifty; it is not mining in the main which makes a mining town, it is the by-products of mining. There is the

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teamster who brings his horses overland to do the work which naturally abounds around a camp, the lawyer, the doctor, the café owner, with his range and his stock of food; the barber, the resort keeper, the trader in the Oldest Profession, the bootlegger and the gambler.

There are persons who seem to be always looking for new fields, as adventurous in the world of commercialism as the explorer is adventurous in seeking unmapped country—the pudgy little woman from Timmons, lugging her seven thousand pounds of hospital equipment over ice and snow and frozen muskeg, the laborers, the prospectors, all to live off of one another until new money should be wrested from the ground.

From a hundred, Rouyn grew to a town of five hundred, then a thousand, while prospectors roamed afar on snowshoes to stake ground they could not even see, and the settlers of a new town arrived steadily, by dog team or airplane or on foot, according to their finances. Rouyn grew lawless—a real “Little Klondike,” so the inhabitants said. It was more imaginary than actual; liquor was barred because of a law prohibiting it within ten miles of railroad construction, thus bringing about bootleg-

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ging. There were stud poker games. There was a place called Vimy Ridge, where women tapped on windows when a man strolled by.

Grand were those days, in the minds of the railroad laborer, the dog driver, the prospector, starved for human association, gaunt-eyed and hungry for human companionship as they rolled in with a month's wages, then rolled out penniless. Dog teams scurried over the ice, laden with liquor. Phonographs screeched in log-cabin edifices which, for the sake of politeness, called themselves dance halls. Chips clicked across the gambling tables — not upon the money of mining, but the money that had been brought there by those who hoped to make money out of the mine to be. Sprawling, drunken in its arrangement as it was often drunken in its citizenry, Rouyn spread out in a dozen directions. The gambler, the ne'er-do-well of this typically motion-picture mining camp, the bootlegger, waxed fat and roseate, free from danger of arrest for the simple reason that there was no jail within sixty miles in which to put him.

But, even while these conditions existed, new ones were growing to send the old order speedily into oblivion. Across Lake Osisko, beneath the shaft

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house of the most important of the ten or fifteen big mines, the smoke rose by day and by night from piles of burning stumps, and blast followed blast as the dynamite exploded, tearing out the rock and stumpage from the side of a new town. It was like the sight and sound of distant warfare; like the ceaseless rumble of the artillery of a steadily encroaching army — an army, incidentally, that spelled the doom of such mining camps as Rouyn was in the winter of 1925-1926.

It was the artillery of an army of workmen as they cleared the ground for the leveling that would mean grassy lawns, the digging of ditches for sewerage, the clearing of muskeg down to its under layer of blue clay for future streets of cement — an army of big business, building the foundations of the model town that would arise when the railroad reached its terminus. It was an army that came by tote road, by dog team and even by airplane; for in this grotesque spot the thrum of a passenger plane sounded daily, landing on ski in the winter, on sea pontoons upon Lake Osisko in the summer, that it might carry passengers at fifty dollars a head, and luxuries at twenty cents a pound — another of those by-products of a mining rush. It was an army which,

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that the shaft house might rise, carried compressor machinery by means of frail canoes, lashed three abreast; that received its supplies for more than a year by motorboat and the slow, expensive method of portage from one waterway to another, but which worked ceaselessly onward at the laying of foundations for the smelter material which would come with the railroad, the houses that would arrive by freight and the rest of the materials that would make a city, to tower over Rouyn, viceless, godly, serene and out of all proportion to the ideas of those who know mining only as mining existed in the days of yore.

CHAPTER II

I have told the story of Rouyn in some particularity, for two reasons. One of them lies in the fact that Rouyn was the first of the districts to spring into being under the new order of North Canadian development. The other is that the story of Rouyn is the typical history of a score of such places, now rounding out the early period of a haphazard life and evolving into what will be, someday, conservative, solid cities of the North. And they may be solid and conservative and old before one really pauses to consider that they have really come into being. Things move that swiftly in Northern Canada these days. A year ago, I happened to be in Northern Manitoba with my wife. The end of the Hudson Bay Railway beckoned to me. It was to be a hard trip, and one which I felt my wife would not enjoy. So I left her to visit with friends in a town that had not even existed eight months before!

There was a time when even Canadians looked upon Canada as a name to be mentioned softly

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when prosperous commonwealths were brought into the conversation. Fifteen years ago, when this writer traversed the Dominion each year as the representative of a circus, there was to be noted everywhere that stand-offish, let-me-alone attitude that one finds so often aligned with the inferiority complex; even three years ago there were more Canadians who spoke of Canada as being a bloody tough job to see through than were exuberant over its future. Contrast, therefore, this attitude with the one recently exemplified in a speech of one of the Dominion's most prominent men:

"I expect that eventually Canada will become the center of the British Empire with its hundreds of millions of happy people."

There must be a reason for such a change in attitude. There is, and it does not lie in that comparatively narrow fringe of populous areas which most persons know as Canada.

The reason is the New North, crammed with minerals, thundering with possibilities for hydro-electric development, sufficiently tillable at remote spots to give small fortunes to hard-working pioneers. And everywhere it bristles with the spires of softwoods which return almost ton for ton in newsprint and

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sulphide papers, to say nothing of the developments of cellulose fiber which produces the silky rayon and kindred products. This is the land which once belonged only to the Indian trapper and the dog-sled driver, to the wandering factor of the Hudson's Bay Company and the French Canadian pioneer, content if he could find a living in the clay revealed by the hacking of a hole in the stubborn, tangled bush. It stretches even beyond this. For now that Canada has started to crack open its Northland, it seems to have no limit. The area of development goes onward into the Barrens, where the ice lies only eight inches under the Caribou moss, and onward beyond even that, to where the white whales play in Hudson Bay, where the ptarmigan flits upon the snowdrifts and the polar bear is not an unusual sight for the prospector. And still farther, where the aviator leans from the cockpit to study out problems in navigation that ships may steam from Churchill to England through a passage once traversed only by explorers.

And as men pour in, so pour the millions of dollars, hundreds upon hundreds of them, money from the United States, from Canada, from England; one hears lump sums discussed in the Northland

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to-day that would have been jeered at as the ravings of a crazed person a decade ago. Twenty-five millions for this, a hundred millions for something else; twenty millions more for a year's railroad-building program, ten millions for the development of a single mine, another million for prospecting — just to find out if a piece of ground is worth spending a real sum of money upon! This is the land that a few years ago was called the "land of the stunted poplar" — a hopeless drag upon a Dominion which felt itself doomed to exist upon a comparatively narrow strip of agricultural country along its southern border.

Naturally, when such statements as the foregoing are made, they demand both proof and a cause. The proof is simple. The cause of this sudden opening up of a country which has lain fallow since the glacier age is a bit more difficult. Expansion following the War, a reawakening of the pioneer spirit, better methods of travel owing to the introduction of the airplane in mapping districts which otherwise might never have been reduced to paper, better railroading — all these things can be cited as contributing causes. But, to this writer's mind, there is something besides that. It is the omnivorous desire,

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particularly in the United States, to know what is going on.

For instance, before the War, it was widely known that practically ninety-five per cent. of the Pre-Cambrian shield on the North American continent, and more than half the world's known quantity, lay in Canada. But after Cobalt and Porcupine were discovered nobody seemed to bother much about the poor old Pre-Cambrian shield. A great part of it lay under muskeg, some under ice; it was a "bloody good country" to stay away from. And suppose somebody should find a mine away off in the bush? What could a person do with it? In fact, mines were found, and mines were abandoned. Rich veins were staked and forgotten. As one prospector remarked to me:

"Sure, I discovered a nice streak of ore in Northern Manitoba when I was trapping in there in the winter of '16. It was lowgrade and lots of it. But I couldn't pack the bloody buggar out on me back, could I?"

Distance, hardships, impossibilities — these three barriers arose incessantly. There the mineral stayed; there was neither the means nor the desire to disturb it. Now and then a strike would be made close

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to a railroad, but the recesses remained intact. Money for development was lacking; beyond that the incentive also was absent. A mine necessitated a smelter on the ground in these remote places. Where would be the power to run it? And who would care to risk money on building in the wilderness? But all the while, more and more persons insisted on reading, greater and greater became the demands for paper, craft paper, sulphides, groundwood pulp. The north was full of spruce and other softwoods looked upon as useless by lumbermen, but prized by the pulp manufacturer.

There was something else — water which practically cut the entire North Country into an endless procession of islands. Dark, frothy-yellow at the rapids, tea-colored in the deeper recesses, one stream begins only that it may merge into another in the North; forests give off their snow-meltage into lakes, lakes into streams, streams into rivers with swirling shallows and thunderous waterfalls. Water is as necessary to paper making as the pulp itself.

So the paper companies moved out of the ravaged districts of the United States and into the North of Canada. They built their mills. They began to harness streams. They penetrated the bush with tall,

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steel structures and singing wires. Electric-lighted towns appeared, even before the branch lines of railroads made their appearance. But the railroads were not far behind; rising communities meant trade; each pulp mill brought with it a little city. On and on, slowly at first, then gradually snowballing, the invasion of the North began. Canada's water power has increased 265 per cent. in the last ten years until she now stands third per capita in power development in the world. The potential horse power is thirty-two million.

All this brought about a number of things. First of all, money began to flow into the North, and with money went a new interest in the country. Cities began to arise; centers of communication. Advanced methods of travel arrived; the airplane joined this naturally after the war, and became a dependable work-a-day method of forest surveys for the establishment of pulp areas and fire protection. Beyond this came two great pieces of knowledge; first that the bush could be beaten, and secondly the knowledge that mining occupied the same position as the widely advertised mousetrap. Find a better mine, or a better place for industrial development and the beaten path to one's door would shortly follow,

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and the millions necessary to the building of a railroad. Prospectors began to branch out. Persons who had tried in vain to peddle their claims renewed their efforts. Suddenly, overnight, it seemed, the North Country began to crack.

A crevice is extending across the north of the whole Dominion now, widened more in the last three years than in all the history of Canada. No longer is the country referred to as the Frozen North; it's the Golden North, and the better etiquette is to forget the former term entirely. From Labrador across the Ungava Country, into Northern Quebec, across the New North of Ontario and through the Patricia district; into Manitoba and northward into the Barren Lands and beyond, across Saskatchewan and Alberta and British Columbia and into the Yukon, the northward push is going forward like the skirmishing lines of a tremendous army. The westward flow of empire in the history of the United States is puny compared to it. In fact, there is no comparison; the dramatics of the Alaskan rush were easier to describe because they were concentrated. But they were no more prevalent.

This northward push, incidentally, is not one which merely quests for gold or other minerals,

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like the chase of '98. It includes agriculture, and the opening up of farming districts, but it is not solely concerned with that, as was the opening of Oklahoma and the Cherokee Strip. It concerns railroad building, under almost as many hardships and privations as those of the building of the Kansas Pacific and the Union Pacific, but that too is a component. For there is everything in the swing to the North, manufacturing, agriculture, mines, water power, the hope of oil and coal, smelters, railroads, opening of new steamship lanes, cities — all these are the impulses of a country which has been until the last few years a frontier in every sense of the word. Perhaps the best illustration of that is the fact that between The Pas, in Northern Manitoba where the Hudson Bay Railway begins its lonely journey into the North, and the end of steel at Fort Churchill, is a distance of five hundred miles. In that entire length of railroad, there are only two public crossings, one of which is in The Pas. That's the country.

It is the last frontier, extending across an entire continent. One finds the battle against the wilderness going on far to the east in the St. John's Lake area; one finds the same conditions being met two

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thousand and more miles westward, with the employment of every conceivable form of device and mechanical contrivance. While the pioneer track layer of a pioneering railroad crowds back the wilderness in its highly mechanical manner, the packers move on ahead of it through the heat or the snow, employing the oldest of methods in the carrying of provisions from cache to cache; stooped, their heads pressed against the tumpline, they move stolidly onward, mile upon mile, carrying the food to men who, beyond civilization, are planning the way and blazing the trail for the machinery that will follow.

The airplanes drone ceaselessly over the forests in fire protection, winter and summer; in the carrying of prospectors and mining engineers, in the private and public carrying of mail, in the hauling of freight to camps and outposts which otherwise would be cut off from civilization from freeze-up in the fall until break-up in the spring. Most modern of all transporting devices, these airplanes are opening up a country which might have lain undeveloped for decades. But the cargo of a thrumming air freighter may as easily be half a dozen huskies for a dog team as the tubing for that exceedingly

RAILROADS IN THE NORTH PREPARE FOR WINTER
AND IT OFFERS NO ALIBI FOR DELAYS



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modern prospecting device, the diamond drill.

One comes to accept the oldest and the newest quite casually in the North Country. Otherwise one would be lost in a maze of comparisons. One finds many persons who never have been on a railroad, but who fly quite as a matter of course. The Western Canada Airways Limited, a private corporation which did not exist a few years ago, carried forty-seven hundred passengers in 1928, with a tremendous increase in 1929. It carried tons of mail and express to prospectors and developers. Much of this went to places that will not see a railroad for years — some of them, perhaps, never.

To gain a true picture of what is happening in Canada to-day, a few figures are necessary. Six years ago, the Canadian National Railways, the government-owned lines, managed to scrape together for one year a net earning of three million dollars. By 1928, those earnings had jumped nearly seventeen hundred per cent. to fifty millions, while the Canadian Pacific paid its ten per cent. dividends with an ease approaching the gracious. According to Canadians, it is only the beginning.

“Why shouldn’t it be?” asked Cyril T. Young, F.R.G.S., the superintendent of development for the

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C.N.R., as we sat one day in his office at Toronto. On every side of him were mapped developments, stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific. "In the first place, to do things, a country must have things. Let's take just a glimpse at Canada.

"Suppose, for instance, that Germany had possessed the bulge on nickel during the war. Suppose she had it now. An addition of two and a half per cent. of nickel, you know, makes rustless steel. The Sheffield statisticians say that the yearly waste from rust and corrosion is two and a half billion dollars. Very well, Canada, in its mines at Sudbury — the rim of a former volcano, twenty by forty miles, to say nothing of its four offsets — controls ninety per cent. of the nickel in all the world!

"As for water power, we think we know how much potential water power there is in Canada, but no one's sure about it. How can there be surety when a great part of the Dominion's possessions haven't even been mapped? We do know, however, that we can continue to develop as fast as cement can be poured, steel rolled and railroads built to carry it, for long after this generation is gone, and still not reach the end of it. We've come to deal in big figures up here. The Duke-Price interests on the Saguenay

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River are developing more than a million horse power for one project alone — one incidentally that will give Canada another bulge: the control of the aluminum market. One unit of that projection is in operation." He laughed. "A mere hundred thousand horse power. The rest is under construction.

"When it is done, the ships will come direct from British Guiana, loaded with bauxite, which is the base of aluminum. They will steam straight up the eastern coast to the St. Lawrence, up the St. Lawrence to the Saguenay and thence upward, straight to the mills. The bauxite deposits are mainly British owned, either on the Gold Coast or in British Guiana, and aluminum right now is an important metal.

"There are the airplanes, for one thing, demanding more and more of it. When a die can be found to stamp automobile bodies out of it, as cork makers stamp out corks, there will not be room enough on earth for all the cheap automobiles that can be manufactured. Aluminum alloys are constantly working upward toward steel's textile strength. Already ten aluminum railroad coaches have been constructed on steel trucks with spun wheels, and are being hauled with thirty per cent. less coal. And again, Canada can control aluminum.

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“A nation, in fact, can control a great many things when there’s white coal in profusion. To gain a true idea of water power, all one has to do is to visualize an industrial map of Canada from the East to the West. It is an incessant string of pulp and paper mills located between the Atlantic and the prairie provinces, one hundred and thirty-two in all, all of them running on water power, and some of those power plants developing as much as one hundred thousand horse power. After one finishes with the paper mills, one can turn to the smelters, which are dotting Canada from the Rockies to Quebec — and again it’s the muskeg water that’s turning out the copper, the gold, the silver and the lead and zinc to keep a nation busy with manufactures. That has had its inevitable effect. Already Canada has reached a total of more than twelve million dollars a day in manufacturing. She is exporting \$241 per head of population against \$190 by Great Britain and \$77 by the United States. You see,” he concluded, “we’re growing up.”

Perhaps that explains it, that period of adolescence when the body seems to expand while you look at it, and the child that was shoots up into a man overnight. His voice may change once in a while

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from bass to tenor, and there may be an extra longness of the legs, but the child that was is gone, almost before one's vision. The comparison is a good one for Canada; it helps one to understand the dizzy swiftness with which things are being done, the casualness of tremendous projects carried out in the face of every conceivable difficulty. Less than three years ago, for instance, I stopped overnight in the bush camp of an engineer who yet must wait three months before he could see the approach of steel, denoting that his railroad job in this particular district was finished. I asked him what he would do then.

"Oh, I don't know. I'm trying to get a place up on the Hudson Bay line. That job may take years and years to finish. It'll be a good long berth."

I asked about him the last time I was in Canada. He's working on a job out in the prairie provinces. That road to Hudson Bay? Oh, it's all done now, and the trains are running over it.

Not only is the railroad running, but a little city has risen, with its hopes in the world, its entire forgetfulness of the fact that three years ago it didn't exist, and with the tremendous responsibility which

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a new town feels for the building of another Queen City of the North.

But in the blooming of the boom towns of the northern country, there is a difference between them and the mushroom villages which sprang up in the early days of development in the United States. True it is that along the Hudson Bay Railroad, where a large part of the pioneer's income depends upon his closeness to the end of steel, the population of one tiny town has at one time or another been almost entirely in all the towns. But even here the boom spirit of continually rushing onward is not an outstanding thing. Instead, the new Canadian town of the present has a tendency to sprout, mushroom, spread and then grow steadily upon that expansion instead of falling away to nothing, as was the history of many American boom camps.

The reason is, of course, that most of these towns are founded upon a specific center. In Northern Manitoba, for instance, some fifty miles north of The Pas, where the hammers pound night and day, where lots sell for three thousand dollars to-day and perhaps four to-morrow, and where automobiles can travel a distance of seven miles in the daytime but only four after dark, owing to the dangers of

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night driving, is the blooming metropolis of Cranberry Portage. A year and a half ago, Cranberry Portage was what its name implied, a path in the bush leading from Cranberry Lakes to Lake Athapuskow, trodden by the Cree with his canoe over his head, or his neck muscles bulging from the pull of a tumpline upon a backpack of a hundred pound upwards. The description is not a facetious one; training from youth has given the northern Cree a certain truck-horse quality. Three hundred pounds carried upon the back is not an unusual load. The North Country, in fact, talks somewhat proudly of Henry Dorian, an Indian, who once carried a load of eight hundred pounds for more than a mile. It was a bet; Dorian's opponent was to pack a load of only six hundred pounds. But when the three-quarters post was reached, a tumpline broke and the opponent fell with the load on top of him. It broke three of his ribs. That was a big laugh for Henry.

So, all the paving that Cranberry Portage got was the pounding of moccasined feet upon a trail. Then, deep in the bush a mine, discovered long before, was sold to the Whitney interests of New York. Somewhere, about a table, men gathered and dis-

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cussed expenses. What would it cost to build a town at the mine, harness Island Falls for water power, develop this mineral property, known as the Flin Flon, put in a smelter, build eighty-eight miles of railroad and take care of a few more odds and ends? The program figured about twenty million. That was a year and a half ago.

To-day, Cranberry Portage is a little city. Night and day the dynamite booms as the stumps are blasted one by one for the new town site with its streets, its water mains, its restricted residence districts. The cement mixers grind ceaselessly. There is an airport, and the planes bring in the special stamped mail each day, landing on pontoons in the summer months, on ski when Lake Athapapuskow is frozen. And Cranberry Portage is already old, established, with its school, its civic government, its "old-timers" who can look back to the day when only a few tents were there. It has even been through the furnace of a Canadian bush fire, in the summer of 1929, to emerge half destroyed, but still determined as to its future.

Nor does any one talk about the glad day when the railroad gets in. The railroad is already in and has been hauling freight for nearly a year! More

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than that, it extends thirty-eight miles beyond, to the Flin Flon property, where another town has been built, and even a larger one will rise when Island Falls on the Churchill River is harnessed to seventy thousand horse power, and the smelter begins to roast the \$600,000,000 of proven ores which the district contains.

Therein lies another difference between the old-time boom camp and the new. Then millions in mines were bandied about merely as a figment of speech. To-day, every million that is mentioned has been catalogued and determined and set aside to cool as a piece of proven statistics. The diamond drill has looked after that.

An inquisitive thing, this diamond drill — inquisitive and acquisitive. To-day it follows the prospector with the surety of a timber cruiser marking out available lumber for cutting. A series of hollow tubes, jointed in five-foot lengths and ending in a tube equipped with a ring of Brazilian carbons, or black diamonds, it is bored into the ground either by steam or by the agency of a tractor-propelled gasoline engine, taken into remote places over the snows of winter. Down and down it goes, containing on the inside a "core lifter" which pulls out

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the rock through which it is boring. Foot by foot that core is assayed. When a diamond-drilling job is done, the owners of a mine know exactly what lies beneath, the values, the depths, the offshoots — the only job remaining is to take out the metal. And while this work goes on deep in the bush, the radio brings to workingmen the programs of the National hook-up, the airplane flies in the mail and the food, and more drill steel when necessary. But beside the cabins, hewn from the native spruce and chinked with caribou moss, the huskies howl in the gray dawn, the snowshoes stand against the cabin walls and the toboggans await their passengers; where the modern cannot go the primitive can, and progress marches unceasingly.

Naturally, when a firing line stretches from an ocean in the east toward the offshoot of an ocean in the north, then back to another ocean in the west — for Canada is pushing from the Atlantic and the Pacific up toward Hudson Bay and the Arctic — one cannot simply step off a train anywhere and find a teeming boom town. In fact, for one merely crossing the continent, Canada might appear to be standing still, or at least in the pioneer stage. Or one may look out the observation window, as I observed a

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man at Kapuskasing, Ontario, and with a bored tone, ask:

“What town is this? Very nice place, what?”

One must know the history of such communities, and the romance behind the smooth lawn of a little park which gives it the appearance of a “very nice place.” One must know its age, and what has happened there. Kapuskasing to-day, it is true, *is* a very nice place. It is a city, set forth in the north of Ontario, where once the bush gave only a grudging path to the rails of the Transcontinental. It has its hotels, its club rooms, its harnessed waterfalls, its park, its tremendous pulp mill kicking forth three hundred and twenty tons of newsprint a day. It has six thousand population — and over at one side, there is a collection of shabby, tar-paper roofed buildings set in an enclosure which once was man-proof and guarded by persons armed to kill. In this enclosure is a monument. It contains the names of Germans, who died there as prisoners of war.

That stockade and little more was Kapuskasing during the War. It was far north. On every side, the black, silent bush stretched mile upon mile; the escaped prisoner who dared to face it might live through the ordeal, but the chances were against

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him. There the Kapuskasing River thundered over a falls. Lakes and streams and muskeg ringed the country about; it was a camp in the bush, afar off where spies could not enter and where the soldier guard had a greater guard to aid him, the tangle of spruce and softwoods more encompassing than even the tangle of barbed wire.

There German prisoners lived, and there some German prisoners died. The War ended. The soldiers went away, likewise those who had been interned. The little French-Canadian village which had prospered upon the location of the camp began to dwindle. Then one day in 1922 some engineers dropped off the Transcontinental and began to spy through their transits.

"Going to spend some money here?" asked a native.

"Oh, some," said an engineer. "Twenty-five or thirty millions."

Seven years is not a long time, but at the New York *Times*-Kimberly Clark plant in Kapuskasing, they speak of one unit as the "old plant."

"You see," they tell you, "we built the old sulphite mill first and then sort of took our time. This newsprint division is all new."

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The apologies concern the harnessing of Spruce Falls at Kapuskasing, supplying power for the entire city and for the erection of the plant, the building of a railroad fifty miles through the bush, the erection of the new plant itself, the establishment of bush camps throughout the timber limits, that a supply of pulp may flow ceaselessly to the booming yards, the erection of fifty miles of steel electric transmission towers and finally the harnessing of Smoky Falls, only one hundred and sixty miles from James Bay, where thousands upon thousands of horse power flow forth to the making of papers for New York breakfast tables.

So it goes. Millions — everywhere millions. One becomes almost apologetic in speaking of any smaller amount. A smelter costs so many millions. A railroad costs a million for twenty or twenty-five miles. Some one mentions a waterfall and the cost of harnessing it is easily computed — in the millions. One goes back to the million or more horse power that is being developed by the Duke-Price interests on the Saguenay River in Northern Quebec, and blinks slightly. For the cost there is a hundred millions.

Perhaps the mention of that much money does

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not complete the picture. Perhaps, however, the fact that this project is causing the building of a complete, made-to-order city of twenty-five thousand population may give a clearer description. Or that the work is still going on after four or five years — that, after all, is perhaps a better comparison for Canada. But the best is the fact that it means more than three fifths of the cost of the Boulder Dam which has kept the West and Congress squabbling for years. But therein lies a difference. The Boulder Dam, with its cost of one hundred and sixty-five millions, is a project carried forth by the power of the United States. The hundred million dollars that is being spent at Isle Maligne, Chicoutimi, Saguenay, Arvida and other spots on the Saguenay project is provided by private interests and at a spot which once was believed to be in the frigid and friendless North.

Nor are all these things done without hardships which parallel the dangers existent even in the days of the opening of the Old West. True, there are no bad men, for the police of Canada, mounted or provincial, have a habit of making bad men into good men. The Indians are either grinning, willing Crees or equally grinning, hard-working Ojibways.

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But there are other dangers equally vicious: there is the danger of the bush which can swallow a wanderer even within a quarter mile of the railroad track. There are the dangers of great distances, of loneliness, of illness far from doctors. There are the flies, humming incessantly in the deep bush when summer comes, the crash of the rapids upon an overloaded canoe, the sweep of wind in the winter with its swish of snow, powdery from the frigidity of fifty below.

But it is accepted. A man dies. Well, he is gone, and another takes his place. A group of engineers, lost, half-starved, staggers into camp. They're there, why waste conversation on talking about what's already happened? A prospector disappears. Maybe he'll show up again. Maybe he won't. There is a far bigger thing than individual loss or individual suffering; it is aggregate success and national well-being. Even for those who experience those hardships, there is a casual attitude that is hard to assimilate, especially if one does not understand the viewpoint of him who is cracking open the North.

During the last trip which this writer made into Canada, a plane which was carrying some pros-

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pectors from north of Churchill on Hudson Bay, was cracked up in the bay, owing to the breaking of a pontoon. They'd had a tough time, those prospectors. Joe Rutherford had died somewhere along the trail. Tom (Two Bits) Cowan was suffering the agonies of frozen feet, although this was early October.

Out from civilization came Captain H. A. Oaks, of the Northern Aerial Mineral Explorations Limited, to bring back the occupants of the wrecked plane. And while this was happening, a tug tossed upon the slate-colored waters of Hudson Bay, lost, with twenty-seven men aboard, and with every indication that it would not reach harbor.

From Deer Lake, then far ahead of the end of steel on the Hudson Bay Railway, from Cormorant Lake, near The Pas, from The Pas itself and Cranberry Portage, planes took off in answer to the call of the radio, heading into the north upon a journey of rescue. Down the roaring Nelson, and out over the bay they went, searching the waters; the tug was too small for the job it had tackled; there might be wholesale deaths —

Months later, I got a letter from one of the prospectors who was aboard the rescue plane piloted by Captain Oaks.

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I took Cowan to the Toronto General Hospital — the letter said — He wrote me from there a few days ago, stating he lost both legs; the right one above the knee, and the left just below the knee. Poor Joe is somewhere in the frozen Barrens; we could not find his body.

On my way out from Churchill with Captain Oaks, I nearly lost my eyesight looking for the government tug which, it was feared, had come to grief somewhere out on "the Bay." I had a pair of binoculars and as we flew down the coast, I kept a sharp lookout for the tug or some of her wreckage. Just before reaching Port Nelson we sighted what we believed to be the tug. Captain Oaks turned the plane and flew several miles toward her. However, it was out a long ways, night was coming on, and we had to find a landing place up the Nelson River before darkness overtook us. The next morning, we circled the first radio station we came to on the steel and dropped a message, telling them we had sighted the tug on her way to Port Nelson. I wasn't any too positive about it and often wondered if Captain Oaks was right in reporting. Was he?

That was the tug. I confirmed the prospector's letter by a talk with Tom Cowan later. Tom uses artificial legs and crutches now. His occupation? He's still a prospector, flying to his work, often in the same plane that bore him out of the Barrens.

CHAPTER III

Behind the frenzied development of the North, there lies a story of dogged persistence, of stolid suffering, and year upon year of effort, expended often with never a brightening glow upon the horizon. Everything cannot happen all in a day either in a human life or that of a country. There must be a foundation, the building of a mental sinew that can undergo the sufferings and hardships necessary to break down a frontier, a pioneer state of mind which can understand and which can vision, when the ordinary person can see nothing. Canada to-day stands in the same position which the United States occupied more than half a century ago. As it stands in its resources and its undeveloped lands and forests and mineral deposits, so does it stand in a large portion of its people. The great rush across the American Desert could not have happened if there had not been heroic persons who had gone ahead. The same is true of Canada. Stalwart pioneering has been going on there for years, but there have not been the dramatics to bring it to the surface.

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One night, in July, 1926, I sat on the muslin-screened porch of a little tar-paper house at the edge of the bush in Northwestern Ontario. Beside me was a young auburn-haired woman busy with conversation and mosquitoes. A smudge burned in a corner of the inclosure, filling the air with smoke and the odor of smoldering moss. Beyond us, on the soft expanse of the Morrison River, a canoe, equipped with an outboard motor, purred to a landing at the squat log buildings of a Hudson's Bay post, there to disgorge a collection of Cree bucks, squaws and papooses, and the hind quarters of a moose, which the rest of the Indian village, flooding from deal building and tepee alike, greeted vociferously. In the room behind us a child played upon a rug of bearskin, a new addition to the little home caused by that everlasting clash between civilization and the wild.

"I was ironing," said the young woman at my side, "when I happened to look up and see something black crossing the yard. So I called my husband and told him I thought I had seen a bear."

"Then" — I asked.

"Oh, I kept on ironing," she answered, "until I heard the shot. Of course I went out then and cele-

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brated with my husband and the children." She said it with a smile, and nonchalantly, this young woman who had been born and reared practically at the edge of New York State, who had taken her college courses in domestic sciences, in music and the languages, and then who had found her true happiness in beating the bush. After a moment the smile faded to an expression of seriousness.

"I was wondering the other day," she said, "whether I'd like to go home for a visit this fall. They don't seem to understand me — my friends, you know. The last time I was there I horrified them. I happened to mention that I loved the North Country, and that two of my three children had been born without a doctor. They couldn't reconcile the two statements."

She spread her hands with a gesture of genial hopelessness, the attitude of a person attempting to explain the unexplainable. The New North is a rather inexplicable thing. The lure of it, yet the somber fierceness of it, the mysticism of the bush, stretching on for miles as though daring one to attempt to conquer it; such pioneer country is an enigma to the ordinary person. The cruelty of the bush, the sweep of the winter winds, the threat of

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forest fire, the long waiting until land can be reclaimed from so much brush and tree growth; one thinks of these things first, because they are the self-evident things; these and the mosquitoes and the black flies waiting to harass the new-comer, the danger of illness, the distance from civilization. What may come later is not taken into consideration. To-day the New North stands defiant, black-bushed, wild, untrammelled; the average person, accustomed to city conveniences, sees no more. But the pioneer has other ideas; that's what makes him a pioneer.

Perhaps this land could best be described as being in its second childhood, for it is venerable indeed in the history of the Company of Adventurers, otherwise known as the Hudson's Bay Company. A century is a comparatively short span for some of the white-painted log outposts which, in the twentieth century, are fulfilling a new duty — that of forming a nucleus for a far different type of growth from the fur trade which was their original cause for existence.

The change which is coming to pass is a romantic one, doubly so in the romance of the arriving and the departing. One day in the late summer I climbed from the doorway of a greasy, North Country

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mail boat, to the platform of a Hudson's Bay post, and stood reflecting upon the changes which even this chugging, unromantic-appearing craft had seen. It was old, this boat, creakily, greasily old as motor crafts go; time was when it had seen no other duties than to drag supplies across the sixty-mile expanse of a choppy lake; gewgaws for the Indians, traps and rifles and ammunition, and in the early spring to come forth to civilization with the break-up, loaded with the pelts of beaver, of fox and ermine and marmot.

True, it would still carry these things; true also, it was about to fulfill an ancient and honorable duty toward the passengers who waited at this far-distant post. But there was a new, a raw ingredient in the ancient ensemble; far out upon the lake a brightly painted boat was speeding by, loaded with prospectors bound for a spot one hundred miles beyond — to a town which prospectors had built in last winter's snow. In the belly of the ancient packet itself were a dozen mail bags, bound for spots where, two years ago, there were only the trapper and the wandering Indian. So fleets the world.

The ancient packet's passengers were waiting; down the corduroyed platform the courtly appear-

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ing factor of the post was assisting two aged, bent Ojibway Indians — a buck and his squaw — to the door of the boat, while the crew helped to stow their canoe, their fly-bitten, hunger-weakened dogs, their supplies and their traps for the beginning of a winter's journey. The ancient passengers were feeble, painfully so; with them was a girl, garishly dressed and adorned with everything from a string of glass beads to a four-star American war-service pin which served as a highly prized brooch; thus equipped with feminine adornments she proceeded to make use of her charms by at once entering into a flirtation with the Cree cargo handler. There was one other companion — a fourteen-year-old boy, dressed in a ridiculous mixture of knickers, moccasins, a sweater and a sailor hat, who sat wall-eyed and motionless, except when he bent abstractedly to slap the deer flies from the raw, bleeding ears of the dogs, for the time was approaching when those dogs would be fed and looked upon as worthwhile beings — work days were coming, and for the husky whose owner is an Indian, work days mean food. Other days mean food too — if the dog can find it; otherwise not.

Into the packet went the aged woman, to slump

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into a knot on the floor, and, doing so, reach for her pipe and tobacco, the long-haired old man sharing a match as he knelt beside her. The factor waved a hand.

“Good-by, John!” he called. “See you next spring.”

Then he sighed and smiled as he turned away. “Every year I say good-by to them, feeling that I’ll never see them again. But in the spring they’re back again with their pelts, to pay their summer’s debts. This year, I don’t know. They’re going farther away. Three hundred miles, maybe four hundred. And he’s a hundred and seventeen!”

“A hundred and seventeen what?” I asked.

“Years. Oh, it’s on the records in there,” and the factor jerked a thumb over a shoulder. “This post is a hundred and twenty years old. Old John came into the world three years later. His wife’s ninety-eight. When they first started trapping they didn’t move from the district — according to the records. But every year it’s a little farther, always a little farther. Now they’re going the greatest distance they’ve ever known. The grand-daughter there will handle the canoe and the great-grandson will run the traps. Maybe Old John and his wife will come

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back, maybe they won't. But they're going just a little farther. Got to, with these prospectors stirring up the bush."

He spoke the sentence almost sorrowfully — like a farewell. Then in explanation:

"This used to be real fur country around here," he said. "Prime furs, good furs and plenty of them. Then the prospectors came, moving here and there through the bush, looking for gold. Building their fires and stripping the ground when they got on what they thought was a vein. You can't expect animals to stay where human beings are keeping them on the move — especially in the breeding season. So they've traveled on and we have to travel after them. But —" he shrugged his shoulders — "that's the way it goes. Always a little farther north."

Always a little farther, until now the Hudson's Bay Company, in its search for furs, has, within the last eight years, established more posts within the Arctic Circle than existed in all its previous history — farther north, farther north, the hunter must go, that England may have her furs, while in the south many an ancient post which once saw the beaver skins stacked rifle-high in exchange for that weapon now deals in such prosaic things as tobacco

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and canned goods and the necessities of civilized life to a far greater extent than it does in raw pelts.

However, the Company of Adventurers — for that is its true name — is not degrading from its romantic beginning; in spite of the fact that there are merchandising establishments which compute their sales in real money where once upon a time the only collateral was that of the Hudson's Bay Company, with its "made beavers" or "skins." There are equally as many places where the old system of barter and trade still holds good, where great canoes, floating upon the high water of spring, bring in the supplies of kettles, of blankets, of hatchets and pins and scissors and fishhooks, of glass beads and mirrors which reflect their values in the furs that some day may see the ultra-conservatism of Bond Street or Fifth Avenue. The difference is that these latter posts are farther advanced along the northern frontier, following the fur, and perhaps building posts which later will form the nucleus of other habitations. Such has always been the history of the Company of Adventurers. At least five solitary posts last year saw towns grow about them and a new order of community life take the place of the solitary. Year by year, the lonely area is being encroached upon,

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the romance of to-day treading upon that of yesterday.

As an evidence of what can be done with new country, there is a great space of territory in the north of Quebec known as the Abitibi District, lying in the north-western protuberance of the province perhaps one hundred and fifty miles north of Ottawa, Ontario, and comprising some seven million acres of farm land in the Clay Belt contiguous to the mining districts of Ontario and Quebec. It is a country for the pioneer only.

The official reports of Canada give warning that a man cannot even expect to bring his land into bearing for at least three years, that there is dense bush to be cleared, loneliness to be combated, and the primeval to be overcome — a land only for the hardy and the experienced; the weakling will not and cannot survive. Yet this new land, this place to be wrested from the wilderness, has changed in fourteen years from practically a negative population of two settlers to a present-day total of more than twenty-five thousand men, women and children, with their farms, their schools, their communities and their towns — and that with the war to interfere.

New country — that's the greatest explanation,

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for there is a certain class of persons in whom the pioneer spirit seems predominant, and by "pioneer spirit" is meant something more than the mere desire to beat the wilderness. Of course the feeling of contest is always there, but a deeper thing than mere material gain actuates the true invader, whether he knows it or not. One cannot see pioneer countries without realizing it. The feverish excitement of the homesteading districts of the United States, for instance, over the problem of the new teacher at the community school, the building, year upon year, by hard labor and mental travail, that there may be something for to-morrow.

"The true pioneer," a grizzled old man once told me, "is a person who has the illusion he is getting something for himself when the truth of the matter is that he is only a bricklayer, building an edifice that he never will see finished. He may talk about what he's going to get out of it personally, but that is usually just talk and little else. The real explanation is that he's the kind of a fellow who's got the family instinct in him a lot stronger than ordinary folks.

"Maybe it's something that dates back to ages that have been forgotten, but it's there just the same

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—the willingness to sacrifice throughout his own life so that children may enjoy the fruits of his work when he's either dead or too old to enjoy them himself. That's the pioneer instinct."

One sees that statement work out in the New North; it is evident in little clearings about a log house; the stumps in the fields, yielding to elimination through the slow process of root rot as the land drains year after year, and soil is put into condition by Nature for the growing of future crops; the pile of pulp wood, stacked off in neat cords, while a bent man and stalwart son work at the task of barking the four-foot sticks which, sooner or later, will find their way to the mill, and perhaps to the breakfast table of a home. For in this regard this New North exerts a big influence upon the happenings of the day. Along the railroad tracks, by the side of filmy, rutty roads, stretching into the swampy bush, everywhere, it seems, there displays itself the steady stream of pulp wood, piled beside the cut-up mills in veritable mountains, or rolling forth white and shiny from the rossing mills which have removed the bark and made the wood ready for grinding; pulp wood piled in the streets of little towns, jamming the rivers, crossed and locked and

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piled like jackstraws flung from the hand of a giant into the back swirl of rapids, rolling down the skidways, loafing at the banks of every sluggish stream — such is pulp wood, traveling onward to the mills which have sprung up like magic in the North Country. Trains rumble through the night, each uniform car fitted with its paper padding at the doorways, each car tagged for its destination, train after train, car after car, ton after ton of it; one realizes truly for the first time in the North Country what the people of other nations mean when they say that America is newspaper mad.

The grotesque part of it all is that this symbol of progress, the newspaper, hungry for print paper, stretching out in its appeals even into districts where railroads have not yet reached, is the thing that makes possible, in more cases than one, the survival of a pioneer, deep in the bush, fighting the age-old struggle for a home in the wilderness. Pulp wood, properly peeled and stacked at the railroad track, brings from six to eight dollars a cord, and five acres of that wood are free to the settler who decides that home for him shall be represented by a light in the clearing. And while the years pass:

“Oh, yeh, I’m married,” said the amiable Mr.

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Currigan of somewhere in the North, as we sat together in the coach of a mixed train on the Transcontinental one day last summer. "Yeh, I'm married, but I ain't bringin' the wife and kids with me. You see, I'm going down to a new camp. Got eight horses up ahead in a stock car; as fine horses as you ever set your eyes on. Ought to be a lot of teaming in this new mining town. But I ain't bringing the wife and kids. You see," then he beamed with the light of the true pioneer in his eyes, "they're going to school, the kids is! Myself, I've been too busy carving out a living all my life to read or write. But my kids'll be different; they can read already!"

That's the explanation of the pioneer; the second, even the third generation which he may never live to see. He may talk of present-day things, he may curse the country, the weather, the work, the difficulties, but he chose to be there of his own free will; he perhaps left a better paying life to go there. And strangely enough, it is not only the spirit of the pioneer of the farm land, but the spirit of the pioneer of every form of industry that one meets in a new country — the forgetfulness of to-day in the glories of to-morrow — and one infected with the pioneer virus can no more resist the lure of a

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new country than a drunkard can resist a drink.

“Look at me!” said Smitty the baker, as he stood before his homemade oven in a tiny shack of tin, of logs and of flapping gunny sacks which formed his bakery and his abode in a boom town of the North Country which, sadly enough, had not realized its early promises. “Just look at me! Here I am in this God-forsaken place, where nearly every cent I’ve got in the world is stuck into this business. Will I pay out? You bet your neck I won’t. And they told me that this place was going to be another Klondike! Can you feature that? Another Klondike, and there aren’t enough prospectors coming into this town to buy fifty loaves of bread a day. Just look at me, will you!” he continued. “Here I am — built that oven myself, built this shack myself; get up at four o’clock in the morning to start my baking and don’t make enough out of it to have a floor put into this place. But then,” he moved confidentially closer, “I haven’t got any kick coming. You ought’ve seen me when I first came up here. I’d gotten soft, sitting around a city; didn’t sleep well at nights, flabby, always sick. Whip my weight in wild cats now. After all, health’s better than wealth, ain’t it?”

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You'll find it always — that strain of optimism. If one doesn't find money, one finds something else — enough to cheer one on one's way until other green grass shows on the opposite side of another fence. Time and place make little difference to the boomers; it's not what they get that counts, it seems. It's the fact that they've been where things are happening, a part of history, as it were.

I walked, for instance, one evening into the paintless, slanting building which formed the office of the only method of quick connection which a sprawling, newly born mining town possessed with the outside world. It was the station of the telephone wire, pushed onward from the nearest town some forty miles away, through muskeg, through dense bush, across rivers and skirting lakes. The men who had fought almost insurmountable difficulties that a frontier town might feel the touch of the outside world had disappeared to other tasks of pioneer work, leaving the finished product behind them. I had expected to find a man at the switchboard; instead there was an eighteen-year-old girl, humming to herself in the infrequent intervals in which she was not screaming into the transmitter in an effort to make herself heard above the static. Happy,

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she was, yet sorrowful, and at last there came the reason:

“I’ve got to go back to-morrow! I’m just taking another girl’s place, you know, and she’s coming in on to-night’s airplane. Isn’t that always the way? You find something you just love, and then they take it away from you.”

I instinctively looked at the town — the jail of twin log cabins on the slope just behind the office, farther on the unpainted abodes where bootleggers sat before their doors, watching warily the movements of the two provincial policemen, the scattered knots of prospectors on the street corners, a man wading boot deep through the mud of a morass of muck and brush and stumpage which passed as a street.

“Something you love, or some one?” I joked.

“Something, of course!” came the reply. “Why? Don’t you love it? I do — just to be a part of it, to feel that you’re making history, you know. Some day” — she smiled — “when I’m old and married, maybe I’ll come here on the train and look at the town and see streets and lights and everything just like a real city. Then I can say that I ran the switch-board when there wasn’t anything but log cabins.

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Won't that be wonderful? But" — and a pout came to her lips — "I've got to go back to-morrow to Haileybury. Nothing ever happens there; it's old and staid and commonplace!"

Haileybury, it might be mentioned, is quite an ancient town near the fringe of the New North. Its history dates far, far back into the past — somewhere around 1904. It's therefore a quarter of a century old.

It was a town carved out of the bush and wherever the forest creeps close to a collection of human habitations, there is history to be told.

"When the fire came" — one does not talk long to persons of the bush country before that statement is made. Indeed, once one has been in the bush, it takes little more than that to visualize the picture. Haileybury, a few miles north of Cobalt, is a place of pretty lawns, of stanch buildings, of well-paved streets lined with homes that would do credit to a town of twice its size; of public buildings and commercial houses; the kind of town which one, at a glance, would picture as having been built by years of steady growth, and frugality and savings. Yet one is soon aided in an entirely different aspect. Near the center of town, beside the hollow, crum-

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bling basements of what once formed a small business block, there lies a safe, shapeless in places where, on October 4, 1922, seventeen hundred degrees of heat Fahrenheit melted that safe into the shapelessness which it now displays. That heat came from the bush.

“There hadn’t been a drop of rain since the sixteenth of September,” a survivor told me. “Every day we’d get out on the streets and look out to the west. There were a dozen bush fires burning; but somehow, when a person is in a town the size of this — we were thirty-seven hundred then — he just can’t imagine the place catching fire. Now can he? It seemed so impossible; besides, the bush ended away over on the other side of the railroad track. So we watched it every day, but we weren’t worried. I guess that’s been the trouble up in this country in the past — we always figured it was somebody else’s fire.

“But about noon that day I walked out along the street and knew that something was about to happen. One of those October winds had risen, blowing seventy miles an hour. I could hardly stand against it. The smoke was lying low now, sweeping through the town like it was coming from a million engine

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stacks, and on the breast of it we could hear the crackling of the bush, coming from how far away we did not know. The whole world was a-roar, the sun was gone; it reminded me of the stories I had read when I was a boy of the eruption of Mount Vesuvius. Shingles were flying in the wind; now and then something hot would brush against me and fall blazing to the ground — a branch of fiery bush, coming from a full quarter mile away.

“Doors were opening, crowds were gathering on the corners; a few people were moving their possessions into their yards as though that would help. The air had become suffocating hot. The whole town had grown hazy now, as though it had been enveloped in a deep fog. I looked towards Lake Temiskaming and could not see it; although, as you know, it lies only at the foot of the hill. I looked up toward the railroad station, and as I did so the whole building seemed to burst into flames.

“Then the fire bell began to toll, ringing ominously from a tower that itself was soon to be blazing. The sound came as though at a great distance; there was the roar of the flames, the shriek of the winds, the rattling of boards being torn loose from their foundations. And with that, a veritable rain of

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fire seemed to shoot over the town. The fire had burned the shingles loose on the roof of the station; the wind had lifted them and carried them on.

“After that” — he smiled wanly — “everything is a bit confused in my memory. Automobiles rushing here and there, gathering up women and children to take them up to New Liskeard, along the shores of the lake, people running for the lake itself — about five hundred who were caught away from means of transportation waded out as far as they could go and stayed there through the fire. Others took to boats, a few suffocated, others actually got lost in the smoky fog. Then there were people who tried to stay behind and fight that thing with lawn hoses — when the whole town was afire! But they stayed just the same.

“Did I say it was two o’clock when the fire bell began to toll? Well, at seven that night, five hours later, the town was gone. So were the towns of North Cobalt, two miles below; and Charlton, about thirty-five miles from here; and Earlton and Heaslip and Uno Park. They say that forty people died in the various places; I think sixteen died here. But I’m not sure of the figures. It’s a big country, you know.”

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And this was the old, staid town of Haileybury, where, said the telephone operator, nothing ever happened!

Incidentally, in that telephone girl's conversation was a little more of the psychology of what makes the population of any new country — the spirit of creation. One notes it even in the camp drunkard, standing in the faint light before the trading post, and delivering his feelings regarding the country as I heard them delivered, one night a few months ago, to a newly arrived person who had dared to say that this was not the new Utopia.

“So it's a rotten country, is it?” asked the holder of the camp drinking record. “An' who makes it rotten — I ask you that. Fell'sh like yourself that come up here an' expect to see golden apples growin' on birch trees. But f'r a man like meself,” and he banged his chest, “that's got th' faith in 'im to see 'er like she'll be some day, then it'sh diff'rent story! An' you don't believe it? Then I'll take to the bush tomorry, wit' me pack on me back — or I won't take a pack!” he added as if that would make it harder. “An' I'll come back nex' Chuesday an' show you what I've got!”

True to his promise, we watched him the next

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morning — Jack Nankervis and myself — taking to the bush, but with his pack on his back, for the bush is not a handy place for one who goes there unprepared, even though a gold mine may lie in ardent waiting. He sang as he walked along; perhaps it was his mornin's mornin' which induced the melody, perhaps not. One sings easily in spite of labor and in spite of discomfort when hope is at one's elbow — hope and its companion spirits of conquest and creation.

For they are ever present. The queerest baseball game I ever saw in my life was upon the top of Quebec hill above the log cabins of what was then Rouyn, upon a diamond fringed with the slashings of the bush which had been cut from it only three days before. The pitcher's box was framed by three birch stumps, the roots of which were too deeply embedded to permit removal; the outfield was a collection of shallow muskeg, deadfall and what not, which allowed a home run no matter where the ball was placed, and the bases were stones which happened to jut above the surface of the ground at distances approximately far enough apart to serve as stopping points.

A burlesque of a ball field it was, but the game

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itself was anything but that. A team from the Waite Montgomery mine had journeyed twenty miles by canoe to play the towners, and the town itself had stopped until that ball game could be finished. When it was ended the citizens did not hurry back to work. Instead, men, women, children, members of ball teams, rum runners, the preacher, the town police, and the mayor labored until the night closed in upon them that they might move that slash a little farther back from the base lines, hook a rope to a few stumps and pull them out, fill sacks with sand so that there might be better bases for the next game, and scoured the outfield in such a manner that a fielder might at least pursue a ball without the danger of breaking a leg.

“You can’t have a real town without real amusement,” argued the mayor. Following which he went back to his duties of the ball field, thence to the business of raiding a stud poker game in a pool hall. While in his hip pocket he carried a blue print of what this place would be some day — even to the ornamental lights on the street corners when they got the power in.

Nor is it all in the towns, where one might naturally expect a spirit of betterment to grow with

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the population. One rainy evening I sat with a railroad engineer and his wife upon the muslin-screened porch of their camp home on the shores of Lake Du Fault, listening to the screaming of the loons and the hum of the mosquitoes.

"We'll soon be through here," said the engineer.

"Glad?" I asked. The wife beamed.

"I should say so. That is, if everything turns out the way we expect it. They're figuring on building a road up into the St. John's Lake Country. That ought to be a real adventure! And the country it'll open up!"

In a far corner of the veranda a gray-haired man stirred from the reading of his book. For forty years he had seen service in the Royal Northwest Mounted Police; now retired, he had taken an easier task, that of traversing by foot and by canoe a route of thirty miles to look after the welfare of the workers of a railroad in the building.

"Guess I'll go too," he said. "It ought to be jolly well worth it."

Whereupon they talked, until late in the night, of the day to come when they would play their part in the weaving of a new thread of steel in the web of commerce. Talked of it as persons would talk

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of a picnic — happily, buoyantly. Yet that day the gray-haired doctor had issued an order for the immunization of every workman; he had found typhoid germs in the dark, tea-colored muskeg drainage which formed their drinking water!

CHAPTER IV

Reverting to a previous statement concerning companions, the person who does not appreciate the value of the dog to the North does not know Canada. It is true that the airplane is making vast inroads; the use of airplanes is growing faster in Canada, by percentage, at least, than in any other country in the world. But as Canadians have a habit of saying, it is a big country.

In a big country, where there are big distances, airplanes cannot work like suburban busses. There must be a mode of travel where pioneers are beating back the bush and where railroads are not sketched in every direction, with good roads to augment them, as is the case in the United States. So it is the canoe in the summer which does the brunt of the work, and the dog-team in winter. But his presence is known always.

One night, Jack Nankervis and I were dead tired as we dropped from the Transcontinental into the semidarkness of the little mushroom town of Hud-

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son, the jumping-off place for what was then new gold regions adjacent to Red Lake, in the Patricia district of Northwestern Ontario. Ten days of muskeg, of dragging ourselves over the tangled deadfall of interminable stretches of burn-over, of literally sitting on the edge of the camp fire at night, that we might eat smoke rather than allow the mosquitoes to eat us; ten days of the soggy humidity of the swamp, the sun-blazed stretches of what once had been forests, but where now only the blackened skeletons of proud trees reared themselves in mocking memory of the shade they long ago had ceased to cast — these things had made us wall-eyed and weary — too weary, in fact, for us to trust our own early-rising capabilities. The Lac Seul packet left shortly after dawn upon the first leg of its long journey to Red Lake, and we must be on it. So with lagging, booted feet we clumped into the unpainted, hastily constructed hotel and sought the one man in sight.

“You the night clerk, pardner?” asked Jack.

“Much as they is,” said the combination chambermaid, hotel keeper and cook, as he began breaking eggs for our belated meal. “I’m tellin’ the world, though, I ain’t goin’ to burn no midnight oil to-

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night. Anybody that comes in can find his room. I been up since five o'clock."

Jack rubbed a stubby chin. "But looka here, pardner," he asked, "how're we going to get up on time? We've got to catch that Red Lake boat."

"Ain't too used to dogs, are you?" asked the other man, as he flipped an egg.

"No, I don't reckon we are."

"Then you'll get up." With that he dismissed the subject and we did likewise.

Jack and I had used the natural alarm clocks of the New North before. Given plenty of North Country huskies and we'd be up on time. For the person who can't awaken to the tuneful discord of a husky serenade which rises, weird and wailing, into the crispness of a North Canada dawn is either deaf or dead.

There's no sound in the world exactly like the howl of a husky. The coyote with his staccato high-pitched cry, the weird soprano of the wolf, the bay-ing of a houn' dawg aiming his muzzle toward the moon — all these are distinct and describable sounds. But a husky has a finesse and range that compare with the other vocalizations as the work of a Metropolitan tenor would overshadow the yap-



THE PRIMITIVE AND MODERN MEET OFTEN IN
NORTH CANADA. A DOG TEAM WAITING FOR
THE TRANSCONTINENTAL TO MOVE ON



A SETTLEMENT ON THE HUDSON BAY
RAILROAD

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ping of Tin Pan Alley. He puts his heart, his soul and all four feet into his work; he rolls his eyes in an ecstasy of mourning that depicts the true artist of his nature; he titillates his throat like the jerk of a jig saw; he pulls in his breath, he fills his lungs until his chest bulges; and then when he raises his head to exactly the right angle, funnels his lips and lets it all out, believe me, it goes somewhere! One may sing of the nightingale, one may weave poesy to the whippoorwill, one may hark the lark, but there yet remains the genius who can accurately describe the outburst of a husky dog, once he gets his stance and lets fly his salutation to the dawn.

Especially is this true if the place be a true dog town of the North Country, where the necessity for a husky population is second only to that of the human personnel. There, indeed, one truly realizes the worth of a group singing to keep a community up and doing. For if any one stays in bed after the grand wa-hoo chorus starts, it's simply because he's too paralyzed, mentally and physically, to do anything else. From atop the hill; from the middle of the street; from the Indian village on the island, one hundred yards out in the lake; from the porches, back yards, under the windows; from sheds, barns,

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shelters and what not—the shivering, lonely wail is shunted from one entertainer to another, in chords, sequences, fortissimos and crescendos, like a vocal battledore and shuttlecock, until the day is thoroughly and officially broken—in more ways than one.

Yet no one seems to mind in the North Country. One reason is, of course, that sufficient inoculation by necessity breeds a certain resistance. The other and main reason is the fact that if the very backbone of a country cannot get along without howling, why, let him howl! Noise, after all, is of little consequence when the noise maker forms not only a faithful beast of burden but a means of connection with the outside world, a sturdy adjunct of pioneering, a method of law enforcement, a companion of the explorer going on in advance of civilization, an integral part of the history of a country, both in its primary exploitation and later development, a winter necessity when new gold calls from remote fastnesses of the bush, a thrill-making component of winter sports, and beyond all this a distinct and highly efficient instrument in the preservation of human life. The husky of the North does all these things and more.

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Incidentally, the term "husky" covers about as wide a range as the field of his activities. Perhaps there may be dog experts who differentiate the husky into a highly particularized breed, with certain specifications which must be complied with before he can deserve the name; but such rules and regulations are not enforced by the average man, whose greatest need is the assurance that his dogs can make the grade when hundreds of miles of ice and snow and vicious wind lie between him and civilization.

And if those dogs, furry tails arched over their backs, abnormally strong chests straining against the breast straps, heads up, pointed ears alert, can snap into it at the command "Mush!" swinging into their typical trot that does not vary mile upon mile; if blizzards fail to stop them, drifts only slow their speed, forty below zero fails to affect them, and long hour after hour of ceaseless effort find them still with the strength in their sturdy limbs and the courage undaunted in their hearts; if at the end of the day they can emit growling joy over a meal of frozen fish, and in the morning pop their heads out from snow that has covered them during the night, then leap, fresh and eager, to the harness for another

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grueling day and as many more as are necessary to complete the journey — if they can do that, they're huskies, and their owner cares little about the fine points of pedigree.

To tell the truth, the exact status of the husky, from a point of progeny, seems to be greatly a matter of argument. The man who started raising huskies when the proverbial Hector was a pup may be insistent upon the assertion that a husky is a dog of any breed whose forebears have been interbred with a brush wolf — taking particular pains to stipulate a brush instead of a timber animal. And just about the time he has floored all comers with this argument, along comes an equally well-informed individual with the announcement that a true husky has no more wolf blood in him than an elephant has hives, and that he is a species peculiar to the Eskimo — perhaps descended from the original canine beasts of burden used in ancient times by the Chinese.

That goes well until some one else delivers the opinion that huskies just grow, like Topsy; that generations of dogs, inuring themselves by the process of evolution, prepare themselves for the rigors of the North Country by growing heavy coats of

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fur, deep chests, hair between the pads of their feet to protect them from snow, and arched tails by continual practice in keeping them out of drifts. So take your choice. Perhaps the best explanation is to say that a husky is a husky, and call it a day.

Besides, it isn't what he is but what he does that counts. As has been remarked in foregoing chapters, the North of Canada is not a teeming metropolis. Neither is it a place of well-paved roads, of arteries of commerce connecting every Hudson's Bay post, every settler's cabin, every far-flung mine, every scattered Indian camp or lumber outfit. Instead, it is a network of lakes, of streams, of stretches of burn-over and deep bush, with a road a rarity and horses useless for travel the greater part of the year. The result is that the canoe and the dog take their turns at forming the means of transportation — the canoe to lie bottom side up in the winter, the dog to fight flies, filch his food and get along as best he can in the majority of cases during the summer. But when the snow flies, then it is that the husky comes into his own. For he is then the backbone of the entire country, from Labrador to Alaska and back to Nova Scotia.

The mails depend upon him as, bucking the

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snow, he begins the packing of his trail for the winter; and, the driver yelling his commands from the light sleigh, he makes the rounds of the various mail outposts. Likewise the supply of food is often dependent upon him — even the carrying of supplies by which whole communities may live. Far in the North Country are numerous Hudson's Bay posts, some old, some new, most of them removed from the general run of civilization and fulfilling the same purpose as the trading posts of the early days in the United States. Contrary to general opinion, a Hudson's Bay post isn't merely a group of log cabins, empty for the greater part of the year and busy only during the time when the trappers come in with their furs.

In quite the opposite fashion, the little settlement is busy the year round; it forms the community center of every activity, the supply depot, the bank and the fur equivalent of the grubstake. There the trapper, camped one hundred miles away in silver-fox country, hies himself every few months for his mail, for a sack of meal, a side of bacon and his tobacco. There the Indian wanders to look over the various 'gew-gaws' collected for the time of fur trading, fingers them longingly, then compromises on

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a suit of underwear, since he is getting it on tick until he can bring in his catch and square up for his past season's debts. There the few newspapers and magazines which filter into a lonely country may be borrowed, or at least glimpsed; there the stores of a frontiersman are to be purchased, the traps necessary to his catch of furs, the axes for clearing a wilderness, the cartridges which may be needed to gain a winter's supply of meat.

It is a crossroads store, in other words, set in a country where there are no crossroads; yet these supplies must be available the year round, otherwise a pioneering outpost could not exist. True, a great many of these posts are supplied by boats plying the rivers or the lakes. But there are other posts where boats cannot go, except for the one trip in the spring when the water is high, and carrying enough to last the little frontier store until the snows shall blow again.

Then, when the earth is white, it is the husky, dog team following upon dog team, in hitches of often six and eight and ten, dragging across the wastes that extend for hundreds upon hundreds of miles the trade necessities that will keep moving the progress of a scattered community — to say nothing

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of making possible the purchase of the fur catch in the spring. And when that catch arrives, if it be before the break-up, out those dogs go again, their sleighs loaded even to a weight of one thousand pounds, with the pelts for a nation's fur market.

Incidentally, the driver who accompanies one of those freight teams must be a bit of a husky himself. From the time he shouts his command "Mush" — a corruption of the French "*marche*" — until the time he halts his dogs at the end of the day, often a distance of twenty or more miles, his gait must be the same as that of his beasts of burden — a queer, shuffling, short-stepped trot, lasting hour after hour without cessation.

"Believe me or not," said H. E. Holland, the Ontario mining recorder at the little town prospect of Pine Ridge, "when we went in to Red Lake in 1926 we had a sixty-year-old driver who gave us more grief than if we'd been hitched to the Transcontinental Limited. Everybody was going hog wild in the Red Lake area, staking claims wherever he could get a stick into the ground, and it was up to the government to send somebody there to record those claims. Naturally, since Red Lake was 180 miles from the railroad, there wasn't any way for

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us to make the grade except by the same manner in which others were doing it — by dog team.

“So we picked up Nehemiah Faulkenham, a sixty-year-old musher, and ordered three teams, to bring in our supplies, our records, tent, stove and other equipment. It was nearly time for the spring break-up. Once off the hard-packed dog trail which led over Lac Seul, we’d have to slop about in six inches of slush to get the sleds back on the trail and the dogs started again. My two assistants and myself took turns on the lightest toboggan — following a hitch of dogs hour in and hour out isn’t any soft task. But Nehemiah didn’t even look at the sled. He’d strike his gait in the morning and he’d keep it all day, that monotonous trot, with never a break until his dogs stopped. Generally that didn’t happen until dusk had closed in and we had found a halfway decent spot at which to spend the night.”

“The rest of us, as soon as we had some food inside us, hit for our eiderdowns and sleep. But not Nehemiah. He’d fool around until midnight, boiling up rice and corn meal and fish for those dogs, cooling it, then getting out their pails and feeding and fussing over them and seeing that they were all settled for the night. After that was done he’d

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flop down for three hours' sleep, awaken on the minute, strip to the skin, take a running jump into a snowdrift, rub himself down, dress — and then was ready for another day. This at sixty! He told us," added Holland with a grin, "that he'd been a pretty good man when he was a young fellow!"

But then, they grow 'em strong in the North Country. And they grow 'em also to have concern about their dogs, especially in the winter. This does not, however, apply to the Indian; his huskies often lead a sad existence, winter or summer. Nor does it hold true in every instance with the pioneer; often he's too busy in his attempts to reclaim the wilderness in the summer to give much attention to whether his dogs have every comfort. But the true driver, who knows that his life may depend upon those very dogs when the snow flies again, gives his animals far more than passing thought; and by so treating his dogs he dispels many of those fables which one so often hears about the fierceness of the husky, his treachery, his unstableness of temper.

One of the busiest mornings I ever experienced was aboard a Hudson's Bay packet in the company of an assortment of huskies, none of which, it seemed, weighed less than seventy pounds. They

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were the prized possessions of a bow-legged little Cornishman, who, his flat-brimmed hat cocked over shining eyes, his underlip stuffed with tobacco, his boots burnished with shoe blacking borrowed from the boat's cook, was on the way back to the world after eight months in the bush. He was taking his dogs with him — as passengers, occupying a private berth in the lifeboat which graced the roof of the slow-moving packet. The craft was crowded. I stood until my legs ached; then, at the invitation of the little prospector, went aloft to his "private suite."

"Damme, but they're fine dogs!" he said. "Sit down there an' look at 'em. As fine a set of dogs as ye'd ever set an eye on. Sit closer, so you can see 'em."

I sat closer. Then, since Barkis seemed willin', I made the mistake of petting one of them. He crawled nearer. I petted him some more. Another got up and moved into range. Then a third and a fourth — and a fifth and a sixth. I petted them all — following which, I yelled for help. They were simultaneously trying to crawl into my lap. More than that, they succeeded. First one lumbering ungainly beast would succeed in clambering upon my knees, and then, smothering me with his size and weight, would

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proceed, to the accompaniment of doleful whining and yapping from the rest, to lick my ears with a tongue like a cross file. And when I pushed him off there was another to take his place, and four more after that. Finally I went below and stood again. After all, it was easier than playing nursemaid to four hundred pounds of dog!

Indeed, the truth about huskies and their nature seems to be that they are greatly like any other strong, virile, full-spirited dog. Naturally, if a litter of husky pups should grow to the adult stage in the wilderness without the association of humans, they would be wild and treacherous and vicious — largely through fear. In fact, there is always a period of slow progress in making friends with a husky. He eyes you, he slinks away, he comes back again, pulled on by the dog nature of him fighting against the wilder instincts; for though all huskies may not be of wolf descent, the majority of them at least exhibit certain traits strongly allied to that animal. A dozen sallies may result before he will submit to the touch of a hand upon his head. But once his ears have been scratched, he likes it as well as any dog. Perhaps a bit more, to judge from his delighted whining.

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As for the story of the driver who must ever be possessed of his whip, it is perhaps true. But that is not because of a certain trait of the dog's nature. It is more likely because of the fact that the dog has been beaten severely, knows that the master is a master only when he has that whip — and when he hasn't, a dog which fears and hates because of cruelty reaches out and bites a hunk out of his tormentor's leg. This also has happened with other dogs. The wise driver does his chastising no more than is absolutely necessary, and then with his hand. The result is that the dog knows his master always carries his weapon with him.

Against this, there is the condition such as that evidenced by the Cornishman's team — a team of overgrown lap dogs. In this there is a counterpart in another so-called wolfbreed — hold a police dog in his place and he is a serious-minded, deliberate worker. Make a house dog or a pet of him and he becomes an absolute nit-wit, with an overwhelming desire to sleep on beds, chase his tail and sit in one's lap. A dog's a dog, it seems, the world over, as well as being all over the world.

Certainly he is all over the North Country, and in a hundred different capacities. In the little town

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of Nakina, stuck by the side of the right of way of the Canadian National Railways in Western Ontario, is a small hospital, the only thing of its kind in hundreds upon hundreds of miles. A team of huskies plays its part in the operation of that dispensary. Whip cracking above their heads, they carry the doctor upon many a weary journey during the winter.

The light sled often forms the ambulance which brings a patient across the icy stretches of lakes, down the rough expanses of frozen rivers and across the drifts of snow-swept burn-over into the warmth and efficiency of a pioneer hospital. And the journey more often is nearer one hundred miles than it is ten — a long trip for the patient; merely a jaunt for the strong, nondescript dogs upon which depends the health of a frontier region.

It is not at all unusual, for instance, for an inspector of the Hudson's Bay Company to start at the fringe of the Arctic Circle in Labrador and hang to that circle all the way across the continent as he visits the lonely posts of the Company of Adventurers which exist in this land of ice. Horses would be out of the question for such an expedition, but it doesn't seem to bother his dogs — nor the in-

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spector either, for that matter. The same is true of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

Of course, since the motion-pictures have become the first, middle and last word on the subject, it probably is *lèse-majesté* to mention a Royal Mounted man as going anywhere except upon a horse. All one has to do to learn everything there is to know about a Royal Canadian Mounted Policeman is to see "Flaming Snow" or the "Passionate Icicle," wherein the red-coated mountie inevitably rides up to the dance hall on his five-thousand dollar steed, looks at his gun, takes off his gloves, clenches his fist, repeats "Get your man!" a few times, and then strides within, where Klondike Kate awaits him with a mug of fourteen per cent. and a dirty smile. That's in the movies. But in real life the mountie is more often than not, when the snows fly, a sittee or a trottee, mushing with his dog team across the frigid wastes, to the distant spot where Eskimo John awaits him, after having poked Eskimo Pete full of holes with a fish spear. For without the aid of dog teams the Royal Canadian Mounted Police wouldn't be nearly the efficient organization which it is. Horses may look good in pictures, but they can't make fast progress on slick ice.

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Dogs can, and because of the fact, they play their part in almost every activity of the North when the skies grow gray with winter and the snows follow one another with an insistence that seems interminable. One finds towns in the North that were literally brought there by dog team; one finds telephone equipment far from waterways, the segmented structures of power lines, the high, frail-appearing look-outs of fire rangers, the lighter machinery of an operating mine, the supplies and smaller materials for the building of a railroad — all these things one finds as the result of strong-legged dogs, tugging away through the snow that a nation may build onward. He is a mainspring of civilization, this husky, and he plays his part in every activity, even to furnishing the thrills of contest to a country denied the usual sports.

A North Canadian is hardly a baseball fan; he sees too few professional games to become an ardent follower. Horse racing is rather difficult when the offering of animals is far more inclined toward the plow type than those accustomed to the barrier. But ask any husky-country man for the record of the Dog Derby at The Pas and the history of the winning driver!

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It all started naturally enough in Alaska, this contest of sleigh teams, with the All-Alaska Sweepstakes, which lasted from the brighter days of Alaska's mining until 1917, when it finally was abandoned. Back in those days they believed in endurance, with the result that early November found prospectors, mushers and dog enthusiasts training their racers for a contest that was not to come until April. But then plenty of training was necessary for both the beast and the man — the race ran from Nome to Candle and return, a slight distance of four hundred-odd miles.

A distance like that, for a dog team, would give the ordinary person the belief that he could watch the start of the race and spend the rest of the spring in Jacksonville, Florida, and come back for the finish about the time that the salmon started running. But the statistics of the nine years in which the race was an annual event show a high-speed record of seventy-four hours fourteen and a fraction minutes for the distance — a steady speed of nearly five and a half miles an hour!

It was when the All-Alaska Sweepstakes was on the down grade, two years before it ceased, that a group of men assembled one day over their drinks in

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the Snake Room of the Opasquai Hotel at The Pas and decided that they ought to have a race of their own. So they did. Rules and regulations were easy enough — they simply borrowed those of the Alaskan contest. The time was set. The race was held with ordinary husky dogs, without preparation or training. Few people in that country ever had seen a husky race; the drivers were North Country men who didn't know their own capabilities. But when that race was over, The Pas had discovered that there was such a thing as a new thrill under the sun, after all!

That year and every year thereafter brought a new hero in the form of a dog racer. Finally there appeared a contestant who was new to this district — Walter Goyne, of Ruby, Alaska, with something different in the way of a hitch. Instead of harnessing his dogs in a straight line, he had put two at the wheel hitched to a pole as horses would be hitched, and three strung out before these, each attached to a single-tree. It gave the dogs extraordinary pulling power; they romped home and gave a street exhibition which lasted for a half hour or so before another racer had even appeared.

That was remarkable from the standpoint of the

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dogs. But the more remarkable thing was that Walter Goyne, who had mushed with them, was crippled, having suffered injuries which had made one leg a full two inches shorter than the other. But just the same, in queer, shuffling fashion, he had got over the ground in pace with his dogs over a nonstop course of one hundred miles!

But the new hero of the Dog Derbies was to have his ending in tragedy. Goyne established kennels at The Pas. He announced himself as being a resident of that place until he had won three races in succession, thus gaining possession of the Derby Cup. The next autumn, with his team and eleven dogs following, he started forth upon one of his training courses. He did not return.

In the extensive kennels which he had established, his Malemutes and huskies and crossbreeds howled for him in vain. Walter Goyne had disappeared into the maw of a vast country; they searched for him in vain. Then one day a North Country man moved swiftly at the sight of nine emaciated dogs, moving in lonely fashion about a lake in the vicinity of The Pas. He called to them, but they would not leave. He searched the vicinity without success, then suddenly halted, hands cupped about his eyes,

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peering through the transparent ice of the lake.

There, below him, as though it were some ghostly mirage, a team of dogs revealed itself, stretched in its harness, each dog in place, as though carved within the ice. Behind that team was a sled, and upright in it a man, his eiderdown robe but slightly disturbed. In the rear of the sleigh lay two of the loose canines; Goyne and eleven dogs had gone to their death through the cracking of the ice above a swift-flowing current; the frigidity of the water seemingly had numbed them so rapidly that there had been practically no resistance.

At noon of the twenty-ninth of November a constable of the provincial police moved into The Pas with a quiet form upon a toboggan drawn by nine slowly moving dogs. Behind that sledge was another carrying the possessions that once had been Walter Goyne's, while in the harness were some of those animals that had made their vigil at Moose Lake — a few puppies running loose. A silent procession it was, viewed silently by those who lined the curbs. A year before they had stood at practically the same spot, cheering a cripple who had given something new to dog racing. And as the procession went onward, the huskies of the town joined it, trotting



WINTER MAIL LEAVING FORT CHURCHILL

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along with those in harness. Up in The Pas they insist that those dogs understood.

Thus do the old and new mingle in a formative country; last winter an airplane made a trip into country where a plane never had been seen before. It dumped out sacks of mail which might have been delayed until spring. But there the airplane must halt; there were no landing places farther on, the country was rocky, rough, jagged with the spires of snow-covered bush, and devoid of lakes upon which a ski-equipped airplane might land. But a dog team was waiting to fill the gap and the mail went on. "

CHAPTER V

A land of continued contrasts is Canada where nothing seems unusual and nothing impossible, even to the whole complete moving of a town. For in Canada, pioneering does not always cease even when the rails have been laid and trains are pounding over them; or when towns have been built, apparently to stay — for sometimes conditions will otherwise. A few years ago the Canadian National Railways decided to build a cut-off from its southern line to its northern line, to form a connecting link in the central-western portion of Ontario. No town was at the junction point; in fact, nothing was there but muskeg and burn-over. The division point, consisting of roundhouses, shops, tank and station, was at a place called Grant, nineteen miles away, together, of course, with the twenty-odd buildings which formed the homes of the workmen. It was impossible to move the railroad so that the cut-off would connect at Grant. Therefore, the only thing to do was to move the town of Grant to connect with the railroad!

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It sounds weird, impossible — when one gets out of the bush country. But when one hears about it up there it seems perfectly natural; prosaic, in fact, especially to those who did the moving. I asked three engineers and two superintendents about it before they could remember enough to fill out the details.

“Oh, it wasn’t anything very exciting,” came finally. “It did look tough for a while on account of the muskeg around Nakina — that’s what we call the town now. But we fixed that by bringing in steam shovels and just scooping the muskeg out, down to the clay. Then there was a nice little problem about how to arrange the town. Of course the people over at Grant had gone to quite a little trouble to fix up their places, and they had locations that they liked, and all that sort of thing. For instance, one man had a house that was some distance from the shops because he didn’t like the noise — you know how those things are. But we worked that out. We just decided that the new town would be the same as the old one even to the placing and the location of the houses.

“Finally we had all our plans made, and ran a train into Grant. Everybody was ready, and they loaded their furniture into box cars that we’d arranged for them. Then with the help of the big hook

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and jacks we put the houses on the flat cars, even if we did have to cut a few of them in two to do it, chocked 'em good and steady for the trip, loaded up the shop machinery, gave the engineer the highball and let 'er go. Well, you'd be surprised at the way things worked out. It wasn't any time until we had those houses unloaded and spotted at relatively the same points in Nakina that they'd occupied in Grant. The shops were the same distance away, walks were put in and everything made shipshape, and the first thing you know, life and business was going on in the same old way. The only difference was, of course, that the whole town — houses, dogs, cats, humans and everything else — had just been jumped twenty miles. But then the country looks about the same all along there, so even that didn't cause much excitement."

Except for one thing which the narrator missed, and that was the fact that Nakina, even though it were a transplanted Grant, immediately set to work to make itself a bigger and better town. Was it not, as Nakina, upon two lines of railroad, where before, as Grant, it had been upon only one? Here, with these advantages, one could build for to-morrow.

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It is thus that a land develops. In Canada, for instance, there is the story of two young men from the United States who decided that they would go prospecting. They had a rich friend. They went to him and asked for a grubstake. It was forthcoming and they moved forth into the North Country and into a district adjacent to that surrounding Cobalt, where mining success seemed sure. There was only one trouble, however: They knew about as much about prospecting in the Canadian bush as a fish knows about flying. But they did their best and spent a summer at it. Then, crestfallen, worried with the prospect of the necessity for making a report of failure, they returned to the States and to their rich friend.

"We had a good time and that was about all," they said.

"You didn't find anything?"

"Nothing but a beautiful place to camp," was the answer. "Wildest country you ever saw in your life, with the spruce so thick that you couldn't see twenty feet, and a waterfall roaring until it almost broke our eardrums."

Then, just to take the subject off mining, they showed a few pictures of that camping spot, and

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particularly of the waterfall. The friend asked questions, then more questions, finally to lean back in his chair.

"Thanks, boys," he said. "This is just about one hundred per cent. better than a gold mine."

The waterfall is harnessed now. It supplies electric power to a city of some two thousand persons and one of the largest of the Canadian pulp and paper mills, profits of which seem to be a bit better than the average gold mine, to say nothing of the hydro-electricity it distributes. No one ever seems to know what may result when there's new country to be traversed.

Once one heard such stories about the American West, with its fabled riches and its fabled men. And like the West, there are in Canada other fables, of a country which worships strength, for the North is and has ever been a land of strong men. A land, for instance, where the mythical giant, Paul Bunyan, picking his teeth with an eighty-foot stick of white pine, is almost as real to the habitant as Santa Claus is to children; where the Canadian railroader bewails the passing of the old broadax man, standing in the frigidity of a forty-below morning, his torso shielded by only a light undershirt, and hewing ties

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with a perspiration-breeding rapidity that would cause the frost to gather a quarter of an inch thick upon his giant chest; where men argue by the hour regarding the weights they can carry on their backs and where two hundred pounds is not at all an unusual burden for a human.

It is a country where strength exists in fancy and in fact. The French Government a few years ago conferred the medal of the Legion of Honor upon an eighty-five-year-old missionary who dotes on carrying the word of his religion beyond the Arctic Circle. Along the Kenejevis River — or Kinijivis, or Con-ejevos, according to which map one studies — the favorite subject of conversation is old Ben Mackenzie, who, at ninety-eight, ran a half mile with two hundred-pound sacks of flour on his back at the sight of a bear; and who, at a later date, shot the Windfall Rapids, refusing to allow his seventy-year-old son to accompany him because he had rheumatism. Or the Nova Scotian who earned his living by lifting a ship's anchor, and then, after this feat of strength, taking up a collection.

But that lifting feat brought a sequel. One day his hand slipped. The anchor fell, and falling, caught him in the abdomen, separating the Nova Scotian

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from his life. The crowd viewed the fallen hero, then finally turned away.

“Aw, it ’twan’t no show annahow,” said one of the onlookers. “They don’t breed no strong men any more. Men like my grandfather, for instance. There was a strong man. Time on time I’ve seen him with two tons of loose hay on his back and a barrel of grindstones under each arm, a-sinking to his knees on a hard road with every step! A strong man, I called him!”

But everything does not need be fabulous. Strength of body and character run easily together on the frontier. There is also strength of purpose. One of the Christmas cards I received last year had been considerably delayed. It had been mailed from an engineer’s camp, far in Northern Manitoba, to travel perhaps by dog team to the end of steel and from there undergo a precarious journey by work train to the beginning of dependable mail routes. It was, in fact, more than a Christmas card; it was the greatest wish that one man could give another, and at the same time an exposition of the loneliness, the yearnings, the feeling of servitude which sometimes takes its place in the hearts of men who are cracking open the Far North. It said:

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"Old Pal, here's hoping that you will have as Merry a Christmas this year as I expect to have in civilization next year."

When Christmas time comes again, a man with a strange light in his eyes will "go out." That amounts almost to a ceremony in the North Country, that mysterious, longed-for thing of "going out." Friends talk of it for weeks in advance, with something of mixed awe and envy in their tones. There are farewells, as though this person were traveling far from civilization instead of into it. Often there are going-away parties, in a lamp-lit tent where men of the North gather about a precious bottle of Hudson's Bay Rum, and drink toasts out of tin cups, while the radio carries to them the music of that far-away land to which a friend is venturing. No one in the North ever says that some one has gone to Winnipeg, or to Toronto, or back to the States. It is sufficient that he has "gone out."

This Christmas, my friend will go out. There will be a strange eagerness about him, and an appearance of almost naïve excitement, in spite of the fact that he is a man who has seen much of the world. He will go out, to cities, to comforts, and to the things he has thought about and longed for and

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dreamed of during the gales of many a winter in the Hudson Bay district, of summers at the edge of the Barren Lands, with the stunted forests smudging the sky with their apparently incessant fires, with the ballast trains roaring past, and the muskeg yielding grudgingly mile by mile as a new railroad drives onward, toward the fringe of the Arctic and a new route across the sea. This Christmas, he will go out. But I understand the North and its men well enough to know one thing conclusively. He won't stay.

Strangely enough, the reason that he won't stay is the same one that now is causing him to think of going out — the completion of a job. When this Christmas rolls around his task of railroading will be done. New cities will be rounding into the maturity which a year or two of existence seems to bring about in the North Country these days.

There is the one for instance at the terminus of the Hudson Bay line, Fort Churchill, where Canada hopes to create one of the great seaports of the world. A few months ago it was a frontier post — five men were lost in an effort to make their way out of it to civilization last autumn; only the discovery of a frontiersman's trap line saved them from death. Only



MUSKEG! THE PIONEER TRACE-LAYER OF THE HUDSON BAY
RAILROAD AT THE EDGE OF THE BARREN LANDS

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the airplanes went there until a few months ago, shooting down out of the sky to a skidding halt upon their squatty skis — they and the chugging tractors, pounding along ceaselessly over the ice as they transferred the paraphernalia of an abandoned port to the one which may some day be an important city.

They are determined things, these winter tractors, with which the North Country takes advantage of the snows. Their front wheels have disappeared, to give way to sled runners. Their propelling power are real caterpillars. They are husky; each has a hundred horse power and low gearing; the tractor itself can carry ten tons, while behind it are dragged some four sleds each loaded with ten tons additional. At the end of the train is a caboose fitted with dining room and bunks, to carry the cook, the extra crews and sometimes the dogs which must, in emergency, be used to spy out a trail, wiped out by the fierceness of a sub-Arctic winter. Night and day, never halting, the heavy tractor trains plunge onward over the bumpy ice, like tanks upon a battlefield, and in this way, over a trail of one hundred eighty miles, the every worthwhile thing of the abandoned terminus of Port Nelson is being transferred to the new harbor of Churchill. That means miles of steel spans,

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immense supply of bridge, jetty and pier steel, dredges, pile drivers and machinery; when the job is done there will not be a worthwhile scrap left at Nelson, and a place once planned as a great northern city will revert again to a spot in the wilderness where a dog team, racing down the frozen Nelson, will bring the mail after freeze-up time.

But when Port Nelson becomes only a place where dog teams call, Churchill, just under the shadow of Sixty, will become a little metropolis. The railroad is there at last. In lumber camps, in mining villages, on trains, in railroad construction outfits, the conversation inevitably turns to the future of Churchill. The boomers vision it as a big city, up there under the Northern Lights; somewhere in that district my friend is now rounding out what he believes to be his last year of labor in the North. A great job is about done. A whole vast section of Northern Canada has been cracked open, extending, with its tendrils of railroad, canoe, tractor and dog-team routes, from The Pas, five hundred miles north of Winnipeg by rail, to the shores of Hudson Bay, another five hundred miles north. My friend, who has seen it through from the first day that he was sent out from The Pas with instructions for the location of



A TRESTLE JOB ON THE HUDSON BAY RAILROAD

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ten miles of railroad within a space of a few weeks that the rush of construction might follow as soon as possible; my friend, who has fought the muskeg, the forest fire, the flies, the loneliness and the sweep of the frigid gales — my friend can “go out.” But he’ll come back; he won’t be able to keep away!

That, of course, sounds like a trick statement. It is one — it concerns the riddle of when the job of really opening up a country which for centuries has maintained a status of utter wilderness, will be actually accomplished. A railroad into Churchill won’t do it. A dozen more roads emanating from that one won’t, in fact, begin to do it. A million more people, even if all of them pioneer, can’t do it. The frontier, as it exists to-day in Canada, is one of those progressive, elusive things which is ever ahead, a sort of multiple barrier; as soon as civilization conquers the frontier as it has existed in the minds of those who have battled it, the discovery is made that another frontier lies beyond, with just as many potentialities and as many allurements in its annihilation as the one just vanquished. A man with an excellent reputation for sane reasoning recently made to me what at one time would have been called a thoroughly insane statement:

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"There will be no last frontier for Canada until the Arctic Circle has been reached and crossed by the workaday world, until business men talk as casually of going there as they now speak of going out to Denver in the United States across what once was the Great American Desert. Nor will the frontier stop with the passage of the Arctic Circle. In these days of airplanes, it is just as logical to think of a route to the northern portions of Europe by traveling across the roof of the world, as it once was to think of crossing the continent with a railroad.

"I believe there will be big industries some day within the Arctic Circle. I can see the day when the raising of caribou and Steffanson's idea of growing musk ox for the market will compete with to-day's cattle business. Reindeer, you may remember, once were believed to be only fit for Kris Kringle's sleigh, but now you can find reindeer steaks on almost any first class restaurant menu; the same will be true of caribou and musk ox. Where industries go, homes go and civilization. Within the next twenty-five years that civilization will extend well into the Arctic Circle. To the person who doubts my statement, I must make the reply that he is not mentally fitted to

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give an opinion. The North is so big, so unexplored, and unknown, so barren of exploitation, so unsurveyed regarding its resources that no one should give a negative opinion as to what development might come up there in the next quarter of a century. Recently aviators for a prospecting company returned from a flight in the Northwest Territory district with the information that they had discovered a range of mountains which appeared on no Canadian map. When a country is big enough to hide a whole mountain range, it is likewise sufficiently extensive to give the laugh to any one who attempts to put a limit on its potentialities."

That's the reason why my friend and all the other heroic men of his type who are opening up the North will be unable to stay in civilization. The same thing that took them into the wilderness in the past will lure them back to it, no matter how many jobs are begun and finished, and no matter how much they may think they want the softness of ordinary life.

A pioneer does not necessarily need a covered wagon, the desire for a new home, a muzzle-loading rifle and a keen eye for Indians as a part of his make-up. These are only theatrical properties, fa-

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miliar to Americans because they were the adjuncts of a pioneering day recent enough to be easily remembered. What makes a pioneer is something different, the God in his soul, no matter how gentle he may be or how vile an oath he may be able to utter, or how drunk he may get the day he "goes out." It is the craving to create, the vision to see things in his own mind that he may never live to look upon in material form, the driving force of creative urge which will not let him alone, but which sends him back to hardships, privations, even to death, whether he wants to go or not. One finds many such men in the North Country.

They include all classes, with the exception of one type. The old rule of the West, where no one asked a man's antecedents, is missing. In the North it is taken for granted that a man's record is not only clean, but meritorious. One finds there, cavorting through the numbers of a square dance at a Pie Social, the æsthetic-eyed gentleman who can discuss expertly the art of every European museum. One finds soldiers of the King who have seen their service in Kipling's India and who knew the Hades of Singapore in the old days. A stubby-legged Cousin Jack or a Cornishman may have drifted into Can-

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ada by way of the African Rand; his buddy, equally stubby and wrinkled, can talk intelligently of the boom mining camps of America, because he has been in every one of them.

In fact, there is in the North a present-day application of a phrase used in the original Hudson's Bay Company charter — Gentlemen of Adventure. Not that the men who are making the North are cavaliers, far from it. They are hard-boiled, hard-fisted frontier fighters who can curse the flies, the temperature, the fires and the muskeg with an artistry born only of hard practise, but one learns quickly in the North that a few oaths do not denote a lack of gentility.

Not long ago, for instance, a company of prospectors, eager-eyed for human companionship, emerged from the bush to the thrill of their first ride on a railroad train in more than a year. There was much conversation in the smoker where they had gathered; at last there drifted into it the name of a frontier woman. One prospector made a remark concerning her character.

No movie theatricals followed. Another prospector simply reached into a pocket, pulled forth his grouch bag and extracted from it a wad of

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currency. Then he motioned a red-coated Mounted Policeman nearer to serve as stakeholder. Having done this, he turned quietly to the defamer and said:

“There’s a hundred dollars that says you’re a dirty liar!”

The conversation changed immediately back to where it had been in the beginning: to mines and mining, bush fires, chalcopyrites and greenstone. Things like that happen frequently in the North. A woman I know recently returned to the States from a raw, new camp, sprawled beside an equally new railroad, jutting from the main line to Hudson Bay. The town is yet in the tent and log-cabin stage. There are railroad workers there, grinning Czechs and Latvians and Lithuanians, Swedes and Belgians and Poles. There are Indians. There are prospectors and boomers and chasers of the rainbow. It is a typical new town of the North where the dynamite booms day and night in the battle of clearing the bush, where moose meat and caribou often appear upon the menus of the local restaurants as “veal,” and where a year ago there was nothing but the cry of the loon, the stink of the swamp and the rattle of a vagrant pike in the lily pads of the near-

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by lake. Some one asked the inevitable question:

“Weren’t you terribly afraid, among all those rough men?”

“Not as much as I often am among New York gentlemen in dinner jackets,” came the quiet reply. “I’ve been much more uncomfortable in many a metropolitan club. For in civilization,” she said smilingly, “when some ‘gentleman’ makes a remark for which you would like to slap his face, the best one can do is to smile and say: ‘Oh, well, he’s just a little tight to-night. Really, when he hasn’t had too much to drink, he’s simply adorable.’”

“But up North, if some one’s a little tight, he stays in the presence of women only as long as he can conceal the fact. Nor is the woman the one to complain. I went to a dance up North. It was a Pie Social for the benefit of a school in a town so new that legislation had not yet provided for it. A certain man asked various women to dance and was refused. Perhaps it was because he was simply not personable. Or it may have been that feminine intuition dictated a lack of desire for his company. The other men noticed it. A full-blooded Cree Indian, in moccasins and beaded coat, became a committee of one. Very quietly he approached the

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intruder and spoke to him, leading him outside. The Cree came back alone.

“That was all. There was no explanation; perhaps none was necessary. The old rules still work up there; women are scarce enough to be inviolable until they prove themselves otherwise.”

As for the clothing, no one pays much attention to that. The man in the roughest outfit may be a millionaire mine owner; he may even possess royal blood. There is more than one nobleman scattered through the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, for instance, as well as among prospectors, mine owners, pioneers. There is one prince of a northern European kingdom whose unhappiest moment is when he is reminded of the fact. The reason is that princedom or pauperdom is not the important thing. There is something bigger: the job of creation, and the pride in it, whether that creator is a grinning Central European laborer, looking from the doorway of his tar-paper shack upon the smooth extent of the ditch he has dug through glacial ice, or the chief engineer, studying the roadbed from the rear platform of his private car. A man may be anything in the North. But the attitude is different with women. She is good until by her own words and actions

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and desires, she proves herself otherwise — and even then, she may be a bad woman, but she's a woman nevertheless, thus creating a fine distinction appreciated fully only by those who understand the frontier.

But for the most part she's a good woman; the bad ones are few and far between. And she's a heroic woman; because men are fighting hardships which all but best even their rugged natures, they appreciate truly what it means to a feminine being to come into pioneering country. But there they come nevertheless; one finds a woman at some far-away portage, fighting it out with her husband; running the trap lines with him through the winter snows and taking her turn with the paddle when summer comes again, when the flies swarm — and when it's possible to get deeper into the bush in the hope of mineral riches.

There were women, for instance, in the Red Lake rush, where it was necessary to make two hundred miles by dog sled to gain the doubtful privilege of staking a claim on ground covered by six feet of snow. There were women in Rouyn, who dragged their possessions over the ice of frozen lakes, or helped portage them by canoe route, that they might

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be among the first to open a little store or restaurant. One of the first emergency flights of an airplane out of Cranberry Portage, nonexistent a year and a half ago, was to carry a young, pretty woman to a hospital for an appendicitis operation. One of the primary flights of the airplane service when Rouyn was a log-cabin town, was to bring in the bride of a storekeeper — a girl who never before had lived outside a city. But she adapted herself. Last winter, an airplane was lost in a blizzard on the shore of James Bay far east of Moose Factory. The passengers were forced to spend the night in the cabin of the plane; it was the only safe place, for the temperature was far below zero and a typical Hudson Bay gale was blowing outside. They were hungry, these passengers. The only possible fire over which anything could be cooked was a blow-torch, carried for the purpose of warming the engine in such emergencies as this.

In that airplane cabin, moving about her cramped quarters as calmly as though she were working in an apartment kitchenette, was a woman.

It was quite a bit of fun, in spite of the seriousness of the surroundings. You see, she was on her honeymoon. She and her new husband, the Reverend

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George Morrow, were on their way to take up their residence at Rupert House, a Hudson's Bay Post on the southeast shores of James Bay, and a delay of a day or so was inconsequential. This had meant quite a lift, to be able to go by airplane; otherwise the trip would have consumed six weeks or more by dog team!

In fact, wherever men go in the North, there women find their way also. True, the percentage of them is less than one in ten, sometimes less than one in a hundred; but the representative is there, nevertheless. She may be a Red Cross nurse, or a railroad nurse, or a trapper's wife, or the wife of a Hudson's Bay factor or a missionary's helpmate, but she's a woman. Nor does she always have the supporting arm of a husband. Often she is alone; more than one fellow up at the end of steel on the Hudson Bay Railroad sighs to himself now and then with the remembrance of the pretty little school-teacher from Iowa who spent a year up in that country as the head of a straggling, frontier settlement's school. There'll be women in Churchill; they're there already. There'll be women far beyond.

For Churchill, even now, is not the farthest north

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of Hudson Bay commercial travel. For where the railroad halts, the tractors begin. Nearly ten degrees above Fort Churchill, under the veritable shadow of the Arctic Circle, lies Chesterfield Inlet, a ragged estuary of Hudson Bay, leading to fresh water and deeper Barrens where men believe that gold and copper and other minerals await the lucky prospector. There the tractors roar at the head of the canvas-covered sleds, on a journey which has lasted all the way from the end of steel, hundreds of miles to the south. There one can find the permanent frost, even in deepest summer, by digging away the soil layer with one's hands. And one will be able to find women there too, once the infiltration truly begins beyond Fort Churchill.

In fact, there are pioneering stories of North Canada's womanhood that are better than those of many men — Mrs. Philippe Croteau, for instance, of Amos, Quebec.

There were thirteen children in the Croteau family when Philippe, the father, died, fifteen years ago at Saint Prosper, in the more settled region of Quebec. The eldest was fifteen years old, the youngest two; between these extremes were five pairs of twins. The farm which Philippe had left as his only

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legacy was stony and poor; for a time the widow strove to earn the family livelihood by milking cows for neighbors at three cents apiece. Then, one day, there drifted to her the story of a strange, new land.

There was a new clay belt, the informants said, over in the Abitibi Country, where the bush was dense and vicious. But it was a land of chance, where other pioneers had been able to make a living. Of course, they had been men, but there had been wives too, who had worked in the fields, once these fields had been wrested from the tangle of bush which covered them. It took courage to go into that country; even the government bulletins warned prospective settlers that no one should attempt to make a home in the region unless those settlers were prepared to undergo the most rigorous of pioneering conditions.

Mrs. Croteau had courage; she had nothing else. She borrowed from the neighbors and the parish priest; purse strings are looser in a country that understands hardships. She obtained a homesteading reservation upon two hundred acres in the parish of St. Therese d'Amos for three dollars with the right to purchase later another hundred acres. Then

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she started for the home she must build from the wilderness.

When the family arrived at Amos, on the trans-continental line of the Canadian National in North-western Quebec, it was destitute; the children were barefoot. But Mrs. Croteau had faith; she borrowed seventy-five dollars more and with that she began the work of clearing.

Only a few of her children were old enough and strong enough to help her. The mosquitoes literally swarmed about her; the black flies chewed at her raw flesh until her features were all but unrecognizable. There was a cabin to build, and the endless fight against the bush; even where the land was *brûlée*, the stumps and charred trunks must be eliminated. A year passed with but infinitesimal progress to the eye; it had been tremendous for this woman. At last a patch of ground had been cleared, sufficient to plant a few potatoes and hay for the horses. Winter came and she sat at the spinning wheel — one still can find such things in parts of Canada — with her neighbors in the making of homespun. Spring arrived, and with it the resumption of her battle. One year melted into another; Mrs. Croteau had developed the muscles

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of a man now; one must have such muscles if one is to swing an ax or guide a plow. Farther, still farther, the bush was beaten back.

Two years ago, the Honorable J. E. Perreault, Provincial Minister of Colonization for Quebec, paid an important visit to Amos. It was to congratulate the owner of a farm which possessed an electrically lighted home, a model barn and stables, two automobiles, thirty-five head of cattle, horses, tractors, and other agricultural implements for the cultivation of one hundred and fifty acres of yielding land, and which inventoried \$42,313. The recipient of that congratulatory call was Mrs. Philippe Croteau.

Such persons do not know that they are making history. They do not care; the problems of life itself and creation are too close to them. However, names are beginning to stand forth in the North already; local characters are developing; fifty years from now there will be legendary figures in Canada that will hold the same importance in the history of its frontier that Buffalo Bill and Kit Carson hold in America's own story of the West.

For, as I have said, the mere building of a road to Hudson Bay will not complete the job. It will only

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furnish a jumping-off place to new frontiers. Two years ago, The Pas, five hundred miles north of Winnipeg, was known to the outside world merely as a place where dog races were held. Five years from now, it will be a staid city; the frontier town may be Churchill, or it may be some place even farther north. One doesn't like to nail down the sides of a prediction regarding the future of Canada.

Two years ago, I held a long and sober conversation with a well-informed Canadian who voiced the opinion that such places as Red Lake, and other settlements of the kind, could not possibly survive the first flush of pioneer settlement.

"They're too far from the railroad," he said. "Red Lake is nearly two hundred miles away from steel. Suppose there are mines there; how will they ever get in supplies? That's Canada's greatest difficulty; its hinterland simply cannot be exploited or even wholly explored. The regions that are unmapped, must largely stay in that condition. How in the world are you going to open up a country without railroads?"

That was two years ago. There is no railroad into Red Lake yet and there is little likelihood that there

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will be one for many years. Its developers do not seem to care much whether a railroad ever gets there or not.

“We’ll run scows over Lac Seul to the first portage,” one of them told me recently. “Then we’ll have a donkey engine on a track crossing that portage. The scows will be pulled over and started onward. At the next portage will be more tracks and another donkey engine. The same thing will happen at the other portages; eventually supplies will arrive at the mines in the same carriers in which they left Hudson, and at a cheaper rate than if brought by railroad.”

So much for a problem of the past. As for the future, and the districts which, two years ago, a man of well-balanced brain condemned to continual wilderness —

A telegram was brought to a friend of mine as we sat at luncheon in Toronto, last spring. He read it, casually. Then he dictated a reply:

“No need to worry. It’s just bad flying weather up there and Oaks is probably waiting for a blizzard to clear. If we don’t hear something from him in a day or so, we’ll send a Fokker in after him.”

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Then when the boy had left, John E. Hammell, president of Canada's largest aerial exploration company, calmly resumed his luncheon. More than two thousand miles away, on the shores of Hudson Bay, two of Hammell's aviators and several prospectors were waiting out a gale. The horizon was gone; all the world was gray with flying snow. But they were not worried.

For these were a portion of a staff of men which in nine months had flown more than one hundred thousand miles of North Canadian country, ninety per cent. of which was at least a thousand miles from a railroad. With their fifteen planes and one hundred prospectors, they had literally populated the North, spotting caches of gasoline and food at points which all but surrounded Hudson Bay, which penetrated Ungava, which swept westward through the MacKenzie District and up into the Northwest Territories and even into the Arctic. They had built radio stations within the shadow of the Arctic Circle. They had discovered a new range of mountains, unnamed lakes, unknown waterfalls, unheard-of rivers.

They had filed claims upon iron ore extending for miles upon Belcher's Islands and in Ungava;



A PROSPECTOR'S AIRPLANE CACHE-CAMP
IN NORTHWEST TERRITORIES, CANADA



TWENTY-FIVE THOUSAND GALLON OIL
STORAGE TANKS AT CAMP 4.
SHERRITT GORDON MINES



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deposits so vast as to be almost fictional, and at the present time worthless. For iron, to be turned into steel, must have the benefit of coke — coal costs one hundred dollars a ton even at Fort Churchill these days. But no one knows what may happen, if Fort Churchill is the successful seaport which Canadians hope it will be, and vessels which have sailed out through Hudson Straits loaded with grain for Liverpool, return with a cargo of coal as ballast.

They had built stations which contain supplies for two years at half a dozen points. They had cached gasoline so that airplanes can traverse the far north with almost taxilike regularity. They had flown regions where the attraction of magnetic minerals is so great that compasses become useless and aviators must guide by the horizon, hour upon hour. They had made at least seven major gold and other mineral discoveries, every one of which will mean the building of new cities.

But after all, these discoveries are not the important thing. It is where they lie and the fact that the company which made them only twelve months before was still in the process of financing!

Such things sound like fiction. After all, the line is not tightly drawn in Canada — not regarding the

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veracity of the happenings, but the strangeness of them. It is easy to find all the elements of romance; one needs only to talk with the first person one meets.

I was, for instance, the sixth passenger one day on The Way Freight, a mixed train running from The Pas to the end of steel on the Hudson Bay Railroad. After a time, I became acquainted with the train butcher; soon we were talking of every old-time circus in America, for he had been reared under the white tops, in the days when there were Hey Rubes, and "grifting" shows, and when the name Barnum meant something more than a trademark. Then I met a constable of provincial police.

He didn't mind the work in Northern Canada. It wasn't very exciting, he said. Not half so exciting, in fact, as the police work he had experienced during the Sinn Fein in Ireland right after the war, when there were riots everywhere and killings were a constant affair. By and by, I talked to a quiet little Scotchman.

He'd been in the Klondike, he had. He'd made the rush with the rest of the bunch in '98. And he'd been a place or two beside that; he'd sailed before

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the mast as a lad and had run into quite a number of happenings rounding the Horn. He remarked that it was sort of queer to have so many people about. He'd just spent two years in the bush over by Lake Athabaska. But then, he guessed, there'd be enough quiet where he was going.

And where was that? He didn't just know. He rather figured to get off the train at Mile 231, hook up his dog team and keep going as long as there was any decent country to prospect.

Then there were two buddies. They seemed inseparable; one spoke with a thick, foreign accent, the other with the twang of a down-easterner. They were cooks, going up to work as chefs on the Hudson Bay construction. When night came, and their supplies had run low, they broke their last piece of bread and shared it. The foreigner was a German; he had been interned five years during the war in Australia, and had dared death in escaping only to be captured and returned to the stockade. The down-easterner had been born in Massachusetts, but he had gone to Canada early in the War and joined Princess Pat's Regiment. Few men still live who did that; the down-easterner carried in his vest pocket a small metal safety razor case. He had

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carried that same razor case during the War; it had saved his life, in fact. The machine-gun bullet which it had stopped was still imbedded there. So goes the North!

CHAPTER VI

The companion train to the Way Freight in those days was the Muskeg Limited. And one time, when I was on a trip, every time the Muskeg Limited stopped, my train mate, the Constable of Manitoba Provincial Police, arose, buttoned up his military greatcoat, slipped his heavy rubbers over his moose-hide moccasins and walked forth upon a secret mission.

There was plenty of time for his investigations. The Muskeg Limited once a week, left The Pas in Northern Manitoba on its lonely journey into a land where once only the musher and his dog team, the trapper, the Treaty Cree and the squaw-man fur-buyer were wont to wander.

A mixed train, carrying the necessities of railroad construction and its hundreds of workers, as well as the food and freight by which some twenty brave little settlements exist, The Muskeg Limited bore, at the end of its string of some fifty freight cars, an ancient tourist coach. Here the passenger

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lived, for when the train tied up for the night, owing to the dangers of newly laid track, the man who was going to the end of steel simply pulled out the seats, spread his eiderdown and slept until morning. Then the train butcher, carrying conveniences beyond civilization, served coffee, and toast and marmalade, a personal touch which pioneers of other days found sadly lacking.

It was nearly a fifty-hour journey in those far-away days of a year ago from The Pas to the end of steel. During the day the train stopped about once an hour. My friend, the constable, knew all those sidings as well as the engineer; he was ready every time the brakes screeched. Soon he was hurrying to the house of a trapper, or to the trading store, thence onward, to interview a grinning Cree and his equally grinning family of stringy-haired children, not to return to the coach again until the high ball sounded from far ahead. Always the search, always the questioning and queries; I watched him with a thrill. Here was an exemplification of all those stories of the frozen North, the indomitable get-your-man spirit that never halted.

One likes to think of such things in pioneer country, where the habitations are of logs or tents, and

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one can see the jerked meat of a newly killed moose hanging outside a trapper's cabin, his food for the winter. This North Country is a new land, where people have drifted from everywhere, old sourdoughs who knew the Klondike and the Yukon, chasers of rainbows, workers from half the world, and where a people is heterogeneous, crime sometimes finds a fertile breeding ground. Several times, I sought to break the guard of the constable's atmosphere of mystery. It was impossible. By the end of the second day, I could stand it no longer; so having established a condition of confidence with a train official, I asked:

"Who's the cop after?"

"Don't know his name," said the train man.

"Wanted for murder, or something of the kind?"

A grin answered me. But no enlightenment. I pursued the matter. At last the train man went to the window and looked carefully out.

"Don't you tell him I told you!" he warned me. "I got it in confidence." Again he gave a nervous look about him. "You see, he found out that a fellow came down out of the Barrens last week — a fellow who's supposed to have discovered a big placer claim up there. And he's on his track, so he

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can find out just where that placer ground is, and go up there and stake out a claim for himself!" Then the train man sighed. "I'd stake out one for myself, if I didn't have to go back on schedule."

After that, my friend, the constable, grew somewhat less interesting. Until this time I had thought that at last, out of the far-stretched frontier into which I had dipped at intervals for several years, I was to see some excitement. But it wasn't the final blow. That night, as we spread our eider-downs, I remarked to the constable:

"Where do you carry your gun, anyway?"

"My gun?" he queried, his Irish face breaking into a grin. "In me pack sack, of course. Now whatever would I be carryin' a gun on me hip up here for? There ain't one of the byes I can't call by their first name — yea, even the Bohunkies!"

There weren't any questions after that. In a country mad with the thought of gold, where strange men foregathered without a question of their antecedents, this constable covered, once every eight days, a "beat" of more than five hundred miles. The little settlements along the way were dependent upon him for their protection. He and he alone represented the power of enforcement; he went into places where

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men had been battling loneliness for months, and where a dozen nationalities presented the various problems of racial conflict. He watched after the sick and cared for the happiness of the able. He was all the law that existed in that five hundred miles, where men lived from day to day upon the thought of the time they'd have when they "went out," of the money they'd spend, the booze they'd buy and the women who'd answer the wink of their eye. He was their sole barrier to the unleashment of every savage instinct that is supposed to rise in hairy breasts when the frontier has been passed. And he didn't even carry a gun!

That is the strangest of all the strange things that are happening these days in the North of Canada. Up there, across a frontier extending for three thousand miles, the experienced and the inexperienced, the old-timers and the new are flooding into a country that is heralded as the greatest of gold fields. To this must be added the innumerable commercial developments and the remainder that the feminine element is invariably far less than ten per cent. of the total population, sometimes one in five hundred.

That ratio, according to all the rules, should

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make for lawlessness. It did in the old days of California, and Colorado and every other mining camp, for that matter, including those of the Klondike. Where the softening influence of woman did not exist, then men were bad and bold and lawless. Especially up in the frozen North, with the glint of gold upon the icicles, with Indians everywhere, and strong, silent men who do such fierce things in the movies and —

Well, anyway, the Runaway Lady wanted romance. Something had happened to the marital joys which she once had known with her husband, so she went from an agricultural city to the fringe of civilization. There she met the inevitable French-Canadian trapper, who told her of the great land north of Churchill, up Chesterfield Inlet Way, where the white whales played and where Love could live untrammelled.

It was just like the movies. It was even more like the movies when the bunch of us, engineers, bosses, trainmen and others, scattered along the construction work of the Hudson Bay Railroad, heard that the Runaway Lady had taken her future into her own hands, and departed with the French-Canadian trapper upon the Muskeg Limited, for points north.

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This was Romance! Especially since the word also traveled along the hand-ring telephone line — with listeners at every engineer's camp — that the husband of the Runaway Lady had resented this departure and intended to do something about it.

Nobody could wish for a better scenario than that; an elopement under the dancing gleam of Northern Lights. All the rest of the stage props were there too: dog teams, fur-lined parkas and moosehide Cree moccasins, snowshoes, the white trail into the land of icebergs and the Trotting Death, as they call the giant migrations of the caribou. Love was flitting toward the Arctic, while in the background an outraged husband planned his revenge!

Up the line of the Muskeg Limited came the Runaway Lady and her French-Canadian swain, while at every stop, gawking men gathered about the train, so they could take a look at them — then rush to the telephone and send the word on to the next stop. In caboose and grub car, under snow-festooned tents, they talked it over, these men of the North. Engineers who the winter before had dared death in a location journey from the end of steel to Fort Churchill, gabbled over the runaway

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and the pursuing husband as though this were to be another Shooting of Dan McGrew.

The cop on the beat — five hundred miles — narrowed his eyes and said he hoped he'd have a chance to talk to all the parties concerned before there was any trouble. The train news-vendor on the Way Freight got the habit of dropping off at every station to ask what news there'd been and if there was any danger of a clem, the same being a circus word for fighting. The nurses at the railroad hospital at Mile 396 grew worried over the matter and smoothed down a cot or two. Onward went the eloping pair, on to the Northland, on toward the Barren Lands and the snows of Sixty-three. But at last they reached the end of steel, Mile 412. There was a telegram awaited.

"You'd better be sensible," it said, "and take the next train home!"

The freeze-up was on just then, with sweep of blizzard and howl of wind, with the forms of the track workers visible at only short distances; even then they were little more than misshapen lumps of dirty white in the grasp of the snow-blown gale. The Runaway Lady read the telegram again, meanwhile dipping her pretty head — for she was pretty —

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deep into her shoulders and veering about in a vain effort to escape the slashing attack of the blizzard. Her clothes did not seem nearly so thick and warm now as they had when she left civilization. Out beyond the end of steel stretched the Barrens, lead-gray and ominous beneath the shifting shield of the storm. The Runaway Lady looked longingly toward the comfort of The Muskeg Limited. The next day, the French-Canadian Trapper went onward, into the bleakness of the North — alone.

For sadly enough, from the standpoint of the melodramatic as it applies in the relation of man to man, about all the excitement that comes out of North Country activities is that engendered by talking about it. The drama of man against the elements, or the antagonism of humanity and the obstacles of Nature, are ever present in an exalted degree; there indeed may the heights and depths be run to every note of the scale. But personal melodrama suffers greatly.

It is good to talk about, though. Men gather about a camp stove in a construction camp, or under the shuddering canvas of some far outpost of aerial navigation and dilate thrillingly upon the roughness and toughness of The Pas. Or some one who knew

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Rouyn, during the log-cabin days, has much to say of all the goings on that happened there. But this writer, having seen The Pas at its supposed roughest and toughest, and having looked, oh, so longingly, for Yukon Jakes and Two Gun Charlies in the "wild days" of Rouyn, and a number of other new Canadian towns, must conclude that the old frontier ain't what she used to be, when it comes to lawlessness.

For instance, there are no dance halls in the gold-tinged North. There is, however, the Crystal Palace, at The Pas, where perfectly staid persons, dressed according to the perfectly staid fashions of any North American city of five thousand, dance decorously to jazz music furnished by a family orchestra. And there is a movie house in a new town almost as quickly as there is a restaurant. There virtue triumphs and vice bites the dust, just as it does in any well-ordered community. There is also the church missionary, holding services wherever people will gather; now and then one gets the familiar thrill of dropping a coin into a Salvation Army tambourine.

There are no gambling halls as such. One listens in vain for the click of the roulette wheel, the call

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of the croupier, and rattle of chuck-a-luck. By being well enough known, one can sneak into the back room of a pool hall, and after being properly introduced, take part in a thoroughly secretive game of draw poker, which any one can do in the most stringent cities. One sees roughly clothed men, unshaven, booted, grim from long months in the bush; one sees these men slightly wobbly on their legs as they pound along the board walks, and one feels the protective urge for innocent womankind. But about that time, one meets some smiling little woman who has lived for months in a new, raw camp, and who shrugs her shoulders with the remark:

"Oh, yes, a roughly dressed man spoke to me one day. But he saw immediately that he'd made a mistake, so he apologized."

For to tell the truth, the badness of the North is the badness of bad boys, not of bad men. Starved for human companionship, dreaming of the big time they'll have when at last they reach civilization, men with burning eyes come out of the bush and hurry for the liquor store, or for the beer "parlour," if the province happens to be one which allows such things.

If the liquor store has been visited, then, like

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boys with stolen apples, they rush for their hotel room, where they sit and drink and talk, hour upon hour, until the bottle is gone and a headache is all that's left. Or if it is the beer parlor, they sit and drink and talk also — the places sound from a distance like the droning of thousands of bluebottle flies, the rising and falling of inflections continuing ceaselessly. Toasts fly in a dozen languages. Great tables are in regulation football huddles, men bent head to head, in their eagerness for the sound of another human's voice, broken perhaps only by the insistent question of some sad man at a side table:

“Were you ever a hundred miles from noo-where in the bush, all alone, an' didn't you get lo-o-o-ne — some?”

To which is joined the rising inflections from a huddle nearby, as arms link and glasses knock against teeth to the call of the Swedish toast:

“Skoël!”

After a time it becomes eleven o'clock, closing time. Many men rise and weave forth from a great, smoke-filled room. There isn't anything else to do; they go to bed, befuddled and happy. They've had a great time, in this wild, hell-bendin' boom town.

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They'll have another wild time to-morrow, if their heads don't ache too much!

Understand, there is lawlessness of a type. There are women whose morals are not above the extraction of a "poke" from the pocket of a befuddled prospector or workingman. There are the "sure-thing" men, the "con" workers and "pay-off guys." There are the smart boys with cards, and the "dips" and "mobs" and "gun-molls." But they exist only as they exist in every city in America; they work stealthily, always with a covert eye for the form of a red coat or a provincial; sneaks and cravens, they hide in the dark and exist with the reptilian sinuosity of their craft. They live in fear, ready to move on at an instant's notice. More than that, they do move; the same women who invaded Rouyn can now be found far in the northwest of Manitoba — if they haven't been shuffled out of there by the genial announcement of a policeman:

" 'Tis a bloody unhealthy country for such little gir-ruls as you. Now supposing you take the next train out."

But even allowing for all these illicit things, these hidden avenues of vice, the whole of frontier Canada, from Rouyn on through the older camps of

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Timmons and Porcupine, across through Hudson and Gold Pines and Red Lake, on up through The Pas, and Cranberry Portage and Flin Flon, across to Herb Lake and upward along the Hudson Bay Railroad to Churchill, the whole of these, I say, might combine and produce enough wickedness to equal a block or so of San Francisco's old Barbary Coast — but I doubt it. To tell the truth, in one small ordinary boom oil town of the United States, I have seen more lawlessness than in all of Canada combined.

Nor is it because the Canadian police concentrate their men immediately a new town starts. Instead of that, life seems to run along on about its usual course for the police; a couple of men is plenty for a new town of three or four thousand. The only time I ever saw policemen at a disadvantage was in a town where there hadn't been time to build a jail. But that matter was finally looked after by the erection of a double log cabin, whereupon the two provincial policemen arrested some fifty persons, jammed them into the jail, fined them impartially the next morning and then rested easy thereafter in the knowledge that a naughty place suddenly had become just like any other small town.



PROSPECTORS OUTFITTING FOR THE BUSH, AT THE PAS

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Of course, there is the argument, advanced by old sourdoughs of Alaska and the Yukon, that the boys haven't the money to make whoopee upon, as they did in the days of '98. That is wrong. There may not be the heavy concentration in the pockets of a few, but there is a far greater distribution of money, in amounts worth the efforts of crooked persons to get it.

Many of the prospectors to-day, for instance, are "company" men, invading all available regions in the vicinity of a rich find. Added to these are the individual prospectors, who may make a strike in the neighborhood of a big development, with a ready market therefore awaiting them. Beyond that are the workers, — of mines, and commercial developments and of the railroads. Figures for the latter are surprising.

It is one thing to make thirty or forty cents an hour and get that money each week. It is quite another to be shoved so far from civilization that payday comes sometimes only once in six months, and even longer. There are "contract companies" in the North who get their wages once a year.

A "company" on railroad work may be anything from one man up. "M. Pizakajain and Company"

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may be merely Mr. Pizakajain in person, or it may be Mr. Pizakajain, Mr. Gujuzzilak, Mr. Kaplanovitch and a dozen others of unpronounceable names, entered under the one to whom the railroad contractors are responsible. These companies are the backbone of the army that is throwing back the frontier.

Great-shouldered, small-headed men — Finns, Swedes, Belgians, Poles, Lithuanians, and Belgians — they form the shock troops that are never idle. They are the men who make it possible for a railroad to be built. For since the North is primitive country, it is necessary in a certain degree that it be conquered by primitive means. The strong back and the Irish buggy, or wheelbarrow, are two of the things that are as necessary as the steam shovel and the airplane.

Muskeg is vicious stuff. One walks upon it like a trapeze performer upon a net; the spongy, porous ground seems constantly rising before one, necessitating high, awkward steps. There is only one way to beat it, and that is to drain it by ditches, sometimes for miles, that the soggiess may depart from beneath a roadbed, leaving an approach to solidity upon which to lay corduroy, ties, rails and ballast. This can be done only by hand.

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So, the contractors of a railroad make sub-contracts, at a usual minimum price of twenty-five cents a yard for ordinary ditching, with allowances for frozen ground, and for rock. There are no hours, no requirements other than that the work be done.

Truck horses of labor are these men. Dawn comes early in the North Country in summer, darkness does not arrive until nearly midnight. And from dawn until dusk these men will labor, with the flies literally clustered upon their bronzed bodies, with the stink of the muskeg upon their clothing, and the monotony of one day's labor melting into the monotony of another without end.

I have seen men go temporarily mad with this monotony; hip-booted, slimy with the scum of the swamp, swollen from the bites of flies, I have seen them drop their tools and go screaming and clawing at each other like veritable animals. Then, their minds too dulled to even direct them in the intricacies of a fist fight, they would merely stand at arms' length and yell out the outpourings of harassed brains. At last, whimpering and cowed by their own eruptiveness, they would return to their labors, to the slime and the greasiness of the age-old morass, to the blue ice beneath the covering of soggy, rotten

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vegetation, to the gritty handles of the long spades, the black smudged barrows; to the monotony of cut and fill, fill and cut, day on day without diversion.

Their board costs a dollar a day, not paid for in money, but subtracted at the time of settlement. Likewise their purchases at the cache. By and by they send word to the engineer that they are "going out." The engineer drops by and looks over the work, estimating always with the edge for the workman; a little bonus, he knows, doesn't hurt when a man is working past the edge of civilization. Then the check is made out, to be cashed at the nearest town, and wide-eyed men, walking on pavements with the high step of those who know only muskeg, come to lights, and people and diversion with a thousand dollars or more apiece for a holiday!

Often it is much more. Sometimes it is gone in a week or so, and M. Pizakajain and Company go back to work. But often it is not. Far ahead of the end of steel, with Major J. G. McLachlan, construction engineer of the Hudson Bay Railroad, I halted last autumn at the sight of a half-dozen snow-streaked men, bent under the weight of heavy pack sacks. They had come a dozen miles already through

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the storm; they had a dozen more to go before they could reach shelter for the night.

"Now for a big time by Winnipeg?" joked the Major. But a grinning Pole shook his head.

"Naw," he answered, "we just got time to catch the boat."

They passed us then. The Major smiled.

"Our commuting workers," he said. "They've been in the bush since early spring. Going out now with about six months' contract money. They'll buy an excursion round-trip ticket to the Old Country for two or three hundred dollars, go back home to Poland, be rich men in their village all winter, and return here in the spring. Which, in a way, beats the life of an engineer, at that! We stay here the year 'round!"

That, of course, disposes of many thousands of dollars. For the others, those who take their money to civilization for the "big time," it usually is accomplished in the unimaginative way of simply getting drunk. Nor is that the real desire; it is a means unto an end. To meet people other than the same stolid faces one has seen for month after month. To talk of far-away places, to hear of adventures, they who have had none save the gruelling battle against

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the elements. To hear jokes and to laugh — to laugh! They roar at the merest turn of a word, these men.

In that desire of communion, with the bottle passing from man to man, lies the real problem of the policeman in the North. Unromantic as it may be, the big job concerns that most modern product of moral progress, the bootlegger!

Prohibition produced the bootlegger in Canada just as it produced the bootlegger in the United States. Then Canada decided to become wet again, under various ramifications of liquor control for the different provinces. Arrangements were made to supply all the liquor that any human could possibly desire. But the bootlegger remained!

There was something about the convenience of the illicit vendor which appealed; by buying his liquor at the government store and “cutting” it to his needs, he could often undersell the government. Then, too, a new camp often might not be deemed large enough to support a “liquor store,” and so the bootlegger moved in, just so that none of the boys need be thirsty. Of course, the higher-up salesman of prohibition days is gone; it is the small fry, constantly hiding and moving, which gives the

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trouble in the new town. That and the "home brew" a far different concoction from American beer — manufactured by foreign workers, far from civilization. But this is more a tribute to the prowess of strong men than something to be mourned over.

For when men are strong enough to ferment any old mixture of dried fruit, place that mash in any kind of a tin container, invert a tin top over that and boil the concoction to distillation with a tin can hanging on one side, and a cake of muskeg ice on the other for condensing purposes, then it is small wonder that they're called strong he-men out of the husky North. One day, an engineer and myself noticed a wisp of smoke coming from the tarpaper shack of a "company" just beyond the end of steel. Quite an odor accompanied it, and loud yelling.

"Don't mind that," said the engineer. "They've probably just tasted a new batch of home brew. That's their tonsils burning out."

Prosaic brewers and prosaic bootleggers interfere terribly with previously formulated ideas of new country. So do persons who become prosaically lost. For another bane of the policeman and the red coat alike is the dude prospector.

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Canada has called volunteers from all the world in these last few years; gold does that. After a time some one reports that a man who left a certain camp on a certain day hasn't yet reached civilization. So out start the police, and often the airplanes go also, scouting from the air while others scout the ground. But in some cases, the matter is solved more easily. Recently, the manager of a big mining company, employing many prospectors, called before him a certain little group of unfortunates whom the bush had closed in upon with a great deal of irregularity.

"Now, men," he said, "I'm not hinting that any of you go out and deliberately get lost. I wouldn't suggest for the world that you're soldiering and that you're taking it easy somewhere in the bush, while we turn the whole North Country upside down, looking for you. But I would like to say that the next prospector who gets lost from this mining outfit loses his job!"

It was wonderful after that, just to see what a miraculous woods sense a certain group of men developed.

There is enough to do in the savage North without worrying about the malingerer. When an airplane sails forth upon a mission of rescue, it must

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be one of seriousness; the fable of the boy who cried "wolf," must not and cannot be allowed to come true in a country all too eager to take the life of an invader. Into this land, the airplane has come as a means of deliverance; every little settlement has its story of rescue. There is the case of the ill at Cranberry Portage, flown into The Pas for hospital treatment. There is the story of an Indian boy, mauled by brown bears, rescued from the air, and placed under medical treatment within a few hours; he had been attacked two hundred and twenty-five miles in the bush. Prospectors have been saved, supplies rushed to the famished, serums taken to the ill. The arrival of an airplane at The Pas, bringing men suffering from exposure, or freezing, or injury to the hospital, there, has become an ordinary affair, all within a little more than a year.

It is from that sort of thing that the North gains its thrills, rather than from the possession of Soapy Smiths and other fabulously bad persons who once made a new country notorious. In the North, a man takes his excitement out of other things: the story of an engineer, telling quietly of the escapes from death which his party had the year before, lost in the Barrens. Or others who speak casually of cold

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so intense that leathern cow-puncher chaps were necessary to hold out the wind. Or. G. C. S. Johnston, resident engineer of the Hudson Bay construction, waving a hand toward the ghosts of burn-over and grinning in retrospect of the day when he saw the Inferno.

“It was just that! For days the forest fires had been burning through the scrub spruce; here and there it would come to the tracks and set off the ties. We had twelve hundred feet burning at one time. Day after day, we never knew when we’d be caught; each time we left our camp we said good-by to it, for a shift of wind might have meant its destruction.

“Then, one day, the clouds came, with the speed of an express train, so low that they seemed to scrape the very tops of the flames. They were black clouds, underfaced with bulging red. Daylight faded, almost in an instant. Then through the glare of the forest fire, the lightning began to flash, while the thunder rolled, as if it were barely passing over our heads. Time after time the flashes came, and at last the downpour. Then the earth began to steam, like the outpouring of a thousand geysers as the rain struck the burning forest. And in an hour, the sun

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was shining again — there was only the steaming *brûlée* to remind us of what had just transpired. A fellow gets a thrill out of a thing like that, away off from civilization!”

Away off from civilization! They live upon it, feed upon it, out at the frontier of the New North. They are proud of the hardships, of the dangers; because they have learned they can conquer them.

There was a time, for instance, when Canada was more than slightly skittish about being called “Our Lady of the Snows.” Of course, there was one very good reason, and that was the fact that the Canada which most persons know is no more a land of perpetual snow than is Buffalo, New York, or Chicago. Nor is even the far North of Canada a place where dog teams chase about in the summer time; this writer has experienced far colder summer weather in his mountain home near Denver, Colorado, than he has in the Hudson Bay country.

In fact, one accustomed to mountain fishing and mountain streams is struck by the warmth of Canadian streams in the summer. One of the first things that happens in the building of a boom camp along one of the innumerable lakes, is the selection of a

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bathing beach. The clothes line of practically every little red-spruce cabin flings a bathing suit to the wind after the daily dip. Summer evenings find the waters alive with the inhabitants of the new villages. Therefore, when the country is heralded as one of eternal ice, the comparison is quickly disputed.

But in winter — it's different in the winter time. Then the blizzards rage and no Canadian denies it. Nor does the Northman care to have his life looked upon at any time as an easy one.

Several years ago, for instance, I covered an assignment into Canada for the *Saturday Evening Post* which was concerned with the life of the prospector. I told of their tribulations in the bush, of the dangers of death for the lone man who attempted to traverse alone the impenetrable jungles of timber growth, or fight his way unaided along the canoe routes. I mentioned the prospectors who carry their vial of poison, that they may end their lives in case of an accident that might otherwise doom them to a dragged-out death. I told of the awful months of loneliness, of the privations, of the flies in summer, of the blizzards in winter. That done, I assembled my proofs, that I could be in readiness for those who might object, on the grounds of overstatement.

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No such objection came. But after a time, there did arrive a letter, from a man in the North of Quebec, containing facts, and pictures —

To show that prospecting in Northern Canada was not the joy-riding life of beer and skittles which he said I had pictured it!

CHAPTER VII

The transition of Canada, from a negative place in the mining activities of the world to one where she threatens absolute supremacy, has come about in little more than a quarter of a century, since, in fact, the discovery of Cobalt in 1903. And to those who may be prone to call the great interest which now lies Northward a recently achieved thing, let it be repeated that it began when La Rose threw the hammer and found silver on the old Temiskaming and Northern Ontario Line twenty-six years ago. Without Cobalt to-day's great push might have been held back for years.

Cobalt was an exceedingly lucky accident. It was more than a silver discovery, it was a revelation in a new kind of prospecting, a kindergarten that would begin an education by which Canada might move into world importance as a mineral producer. Before Cobalt, it is true, there had been gold mining in the West, and for that matter, other mineral exploitation both on the Pacific Coast and in the

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maritime provinces. But Cobalt was a spectacular camp in a land that was supposed to be comparatively worthless. It proved that other districts of swamp and rock and muskeg might also be valuable.

That rush into Cobalt from 1905 on included men from every mining district in the world. But when these experienced prospectors reached Cobalt, they found that everything they knew was useless. This was blind country. The mountain man — most mining had been done until this time in mountainous country — hardly knew which way to turn. Everything must be learned over again; it was different here from hill country where minerals have sent forth their telltales by pieces of float broken from the vein and carried downhill by every freshet, where one may learn the placer secrets of a country by panning the stream sands, or look over miles of country from any mountain top. Here Nature had decided to keep her riches a secret. A great many persons who rushed to Cobalt stayed there, or merely followed the new mining camps as they sprung up. But there were others who got the “feel” of hidden wealth.

“It really isn’t the wealth,” an old prospector told me recently, “it’s the challenge of the unknown. It’s

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the joy of making something out of nothing. I've been lucky at prospecting; I'm comparatively rich as a result of it. But the money has not been my prime interest. I'll start into the bush for instance, all fired with the idea of finding a big mine. I'll think about how the ore will look and what kind it will be, and how hard the vein will be to strip and what the ore body will run to the ton. Then I'll dream around the camp fire of how the whole thing will be developed, how the first few people will come in and build their cabins. Then more people will come, and a little town will start. When I'm on a portage with my shoulders aching under my pack, I'll cheer myself up with the thought that some day, just because I'm plugging along this way, a railroad may run over the very territory I'm covering. Then, sure enough, I find a mine.

"It's away off from civilization. There's every trouble in the world to get it started. First one outfit takes hold of it, then another; hope flares and hope dies. But finally it gets to going. Sure enough, the little town starts, just like I dreamed it would. There's a post-office, and a picture show and women folks making a home in the wilderness, and I grin to myself with the joy of it. Then bigger boats take

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the place of the canoes in which the first pioneers came in. More people arrive. There's a main street now and I'm as happy as a bug in a rug. After awhile, a rumor circulates that the railroad is going to build a branch line across what once was wilderness, and I get a real thrill out of that too. Then the engineers come, setting up camps, and fighting the flies or the sweep of zero winds while they run their trial lines and decide upon the location for the road; they get to know me pretty well, because I drop into their camps often, just to talk about that railroad. Finally, the gangs appear, working ahead of the pioneer track layer; there's the ceremony of driving the golden spike, the place that I came into as a wilderness is a real little city now, with society, and business houses, and a civic spirit and a desire to grow and be a real unit in the prosperity of the Dominion —

“About that time I wake up one morning, look at the main street with all its activities, see the automobiles running around on streets that were once just swamp and muskeg, glance over toward the shaft house of the mine and watch the shift on its way to work. I look at it all and I say to myself:

“‘This place has gotten too civilized for me!

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I wonder where I could find another mine?’ ”

For after all, if it were truly the fever for fortunes which actuated a prospector, there would be few of them in the business. The mining industry of Canada has grown to an annual production of more than a quarter of a billion dollars. Twenty-five years ago, it was only seventy-five million dollars a year. That means discoveries which, during a quarter of a century have run into a total of several billion dollars. Even if only one per cent. of this went to the prospectors who fought the bush to open up those new mines, it would mean a goodly number of millionaire and near-millionaire prospectors. I know a few. But it takes a good deal of thinking to add another name after one has passed the dozen mark.

There's a million always just ahead for the prospector. It usually remains just ahead to the end of his life. As an old fellow remarked to me:

“When I first came into this country, I didn't have nothin' but a trusting disposition. Now I ain't even got that.”

But that's false for the majority. The usual prospector is a guileless, trusting fellow, who expects every one else to be as honest as himself, as innocent of business as he is wise in the ways of the bush;

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his job is to find mines and after he has found them, the resultant incidents usually make him a dizzy piece of driftwood in a whirlpool of finance from which he emerges with little more money than he had in the beginning, but a great desire to find another mine.

So it simmers down from wealth to what is known as a "stake" — to find something that looks worth while, to sell those new claims for a few thousand dollars, so that he may keep going until he finds another property and sells that for another stake and thus continues a cycle which allows him to keep hunting for the rest of his life. The true prospector gets a little balmy at the thought of big money. Mostly his idea of heaven is a five-thousand-dollar stake, a new country to look at and a fishhook. Perhaps the latter is the most important. Given a fishhook and a piece of fat meat for bait in a country dotted with fish-filled lakes, and a fellow can look about considerably before he really gets hungry.

If one questions these men, he'll often find that his beginnings were, in one way or another, at Cobalt. That was the big boom camp, where the tough, lustrous nickel-white metal lay in definite veins and where a man could work his claim from the surface

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until he got enough money to really develop his mine. Cobalt was the cradle of to-day's Canadian prospector. Of course there are young men in the bush to-day — but ten to one they learned much of what they know from some older man who went up to Cobalt in the rush days of 1905 and 1906.

After those years, it was an emerging process in which other camps bloomed or died, and in which the spread of prospecting gradually moved north and east and west, until now it forms the greatest area of gold-hunting activities in the history of the world. Last summer ten thousand men were scattered through the bush of Canada; so great was the territory in which they worked that it was difficult to find more than a dozen of them together in the whole Dominion.

Until two seasons ago, the method of every man was the same — and for eighty per cent. of the prospectors now at work in the bush it will remain the same for a few years more at least. That is the old-time method of going into the bush to find your own gold mine — and risk your life while doing it.

It's even more than that; sometimes one's mind is better than one's life. Three summers ago, the

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good ship *Prospector*, painted in bright gold colors to further enhance its name, was churning enthusiastically at a ten-mile-an-hour speed along the broad waters of Lac Seul in Northwestern Ontario, bound for civilization. In the passengers' quarters, where were crowded some fifteen men, a stolid cook stumbled over the legs and feet which seemed to protrude from every direction, and in revenge, now and then caused a disruption of the entire party, as he opened the lids of the long benches which served as seats that he might extract therefrom the necessities of a meal. Thereby he evoked loud protests of feigned indignation from the human cargo, delighted at any excuse to while away a few moments out of eleven hours of monotony — that is, from all the cargo save two.

They had not spoken a word all day, from the embarkment at dawn on through the long dragging hours which had ensued along the hundred and twenty miles of waterway journey. Not a word to any one; two gray-haired, thin-featured men who looked about them with starved eyes, who read omnivorously every scrap of ancient magazine or newspaper which came their way, who eavesdropped on all conversations, pretending meanwhile to be

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anything but listening; yet two men who spoke not, even in spite of the piteous eyes of them, saying that which the lips could not utter — the joy of human companionship, the surfeiting of a desire for their kind, dazed, now that they were again among humans, with newspapers and magazines from which they might learn what that vague thing, the world, had been doing all the time they had been away.

“Queer pair,” I said to the sparkling-eyed little Cornishman at my side. Cap Martin, follower of half a hundred gold rushes, from Colorado to Australia and back again, grinned genially.

“Oh, I don’t know,” he said. “I’ve been that way myself — bushed, you know.”

“Bushed?”

At this, another seeker of gold moved nearer. “Not crazy,” he suggested in a low voice. “Just dumb. Now that they’re out here, they don’t know anything to talk about. They’ve probably been in a bush a long time. Nothing to see but bush. Nothing to talk about but the bush. Ever been in the bush for a year or so at a stretch?”

I confessed that I hadn’t. But Cap Martin shuffled closer.

“Say,” he announced, to the tucking of a pinch

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of snuff under a lip, "it's funny how it gets you. At first you talk to beat all get out — talk about everything; how you're going to find the greatest vein of gold ore in the world, how still everything is in the bush and what you'll do if the bush takes fire — that's always good for a lot of conversation. Then there are the flies to cuss, and the rain. But after awhile, you don't talk so much, and you just slap at the flies instead of cussing 'em. By and by you don't talk at all. Finally it gets so bad that when you come back to civilization you've forgotten how to find things to make talk; that part of your brain just seems to've stopped working, and you're like those two old boys over there. They're sure bushed, ain't they?"

"They sure are," chuckled the other prospector, then shrugged his shoulders. "Me," he exclaimed, "laughing at them, while I'm still carrying this if anything should happen in the bush!"

He pulled a bottle from his pocket, once garishly adorned with red letters and bold-faced admonitions. The label was nearly black now from constant carrying. The letters were blurred from perspiration and rain, still faintly, however, carrying their warning:

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• PRUSSIC ACID

POISON!

The prospector held it in contemplation.

"A mighty good friend to have in the bush," he said at last. "If you're alone, and something happens, you at least know you can shut down on the suffering."

After that, he changed the subject. Men who search for gold like to keep before them the lure of the thing which sends them into the wilds, and not what might happen during the journey. The prospector's life, no matter in what region he may work, is not an easy one.

One often is prone to judge all prospectors by the half-crazed, easily deluded creature which one finds, the hang-over of a deserted mining camp, aged, ill fed, worse clothed and still ranting in his cracked voice that "them hills is still full of gold, pardner." Therefore all prospectors must be like these. But it is not true; another generation has come since these men found gold — a different generation from that more leisurely one which existed in the past.

True, there are still prospectors who follow the will-o'-the-wisp, enduring every hardship, for the

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simple reason that to them it is an easy form of life — a camp in the bush, three months of livelihood on a grubstake and the report of failure is the ruse of more than one. But the main body is composed of a type entirely distinct, especially in a land where even a camp in a bush for a month or three months is enough of a hardship in itself, and where prospecting for precious metals demands, among other things, that a man be willing to risk his life.

Yet to a certain type and group of men, that is what gives the life its zest. The lure of far places, the defeating of natural obstacles which seem to rise on every side. Some men climb mountains for excitement, some race automobiles, knowing that there may be a spill in any lap; some like airplanes and some like to be prospectors. The average prospector has no foolish ideas about his chances of riches. Of course, there is always the hope, but the candid gold hunter will tell you that one man out of a thousand stands a chance of striking it rich in a lifetime. Thus they pursue their course in the Northern bush, some to win and many to lose, even to the greater stake. Now and then a wanderer of the bush halts in his slow journey through the tangled

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wilds, and releasing the terrific weight on his back, brings forth his spade that he may cover with earth the miserable little heap of bones that once had been a man.

Strangely enough, however, the fact that now and then a man dies in the bush is not by any means the reason that there is at this time an acute shortage of expert prospectors in those vast areas where lie gold, silver and copper fields of unknown riches. In fact, the hardships of the bush are the last thing that a gold seeker really thinks about. That part seems to be an instinctive knowledge, to be combatted as a part of this great game of hide and seek.

The real cause of the shortage lies in the fact that riches in the form of minerals are the most impatient form of wealth existent. Other things may wait, but not gold.

"I've got to go back to the Port Arthur district some of these days," said a prospector to me as we sat one day upon the rough-hewed steps of a log-slabbed café in the copper-gold camp of Rouyn. "I think maybe I might've missed something over there. You see, I've got a partner and he'd been over in Manitoba. Well, this district around Beardmore, just east of Port Arthur, is right along the railroad.

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I'd found some pretty good-looking stuff there, and was just thinking about staking out a claim, when along came my partner on a freight train and began waving to me.

" 'Come on!' he yelled. 'Make a run for it and catch this train! Grab your pack sack! We're going to stop for water about a quarter mile down. You can make it if you hurry.'

" 'What's the rush?' I yelled back.

" 'Big strike down the line about one hundred miles. Bigger'n anything we've run into yet. Come on!'

"So I ditched my claim and pretty near broke my back carrying that pack sack down the track on a dogtrot to catch that train. Well, when we got over there, we staked some ground and were getting ready to do our assessment work, when word came along of this Rouyn excitement. So we just let things slide at the old place and came over here. That's the way it goes."

As it ever has gone when gold has called. There is an old saying among miners and prospectors that silver lies in a vein, but gold's where you find it — meaning, of course, that there is no set rule which can be followed for the discovery of that metal, and

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it is impatient once even its possible whereabouts have been discovered.

True, there are various divisions of prospectors. There is the civil engineer, for instance, with a knowledge of geology, who stakes ground as he goes through in advance of a railroad or upon a forest survey. Then, too, there is the mathematical, hard-headed, sharp-eyed scientific man who is sent forth by the big mining companies by airplane or otherwise, upon a stated salary, to locate ground and stake the claims which he is allowed under the various provincial acts, while on his trail come the workmen to do the assessment work necessary under the mining acts, thus holding the ground for future development, even though that may not come for twenty years. For a third class, there is the newly graduated school-of-mines student, anxious to put his theories into practice. And finally there is that real figure of romance, the grubstake prospector.

It is not a cheap affair to prospect in the Northern bush; I have met more than one man in the North Country who had expended one thousand dollars or more for his summer in the Pre-Cambrian. Prospectors as a rule are not rich men; when that time comes, they lean upon their wealth and let somebody

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else do the searching. The result is that the average prospector is grubstaked — that gambling process by which some one else puts up the money and stays at home while the prospector takes the hardships, dividing the profits, if any.

“How do I get along?” a prospector said to me, as we watched the distant blue of a forest fire from the window of a chugging Hudson’s Bay Company packet, en route to the Red Lake district, in 1926. “Well, I’ve got it kind of easy. You see, my doctor — that is, he used to be my doctor in Winnipeg — always was an awful active fellow. He’d go out moose hunting every fall, and knew every stream in Canada where a fellow could step into a five-pound speckled trout. Just a fellow who loved the outdoors, every inch of him. I’ve seen him having a peach of a time with the black flies so thick around him you’d think he was an electric light in North Bay during shad-fly time. Had plenty of money, what he’d made and what’d been left him; doctoring wasn’t any more’n something to keep him busy when he wasn’t out in the bush. Then he got all smashed up in an automobile accident. Bedridden now. So” — and the prospector grinned — “I’m his substitute.”

“Of course,” he continued, “there’s always the

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chance that I'll find something big and we'll get a thrill out of that. But besides that, there's the adventure. He grubstakes me, and I go out every year, and follow every staking bee. One of the first in the Red Lake rush last winter, for instance; fact is, whenever I hear of excitement anywhere, I'm johnny on the spot; guess we've got claims staked out all over Canada. Then, when the season's over, I go back and spend the winter telling him about it, and it's just like he had been there with me."

An exaggerated case? Perhaps in some of its elements, but not in all of them by any means. Prospecting is a gamble; it is a life for an adventurer. And there are those who cannot move from their desks or from behind their counters to get the real thrills which their souls demand. Canada is a new country, a place where there is still adventure to be had at every corner, still the thrill of risk, of obstacles to be overcome — and only overnight away. To those who feel the call of the bush, the desire to get out, the urge to quiver with excitement, yet who cannot do it personally, there is the prospector to go forth into strange places, to see strange things and to gamble against the elements and Nature in search for that most romantic of all things — gold.

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Gold! It calls to them behind their counters and their desks. No matter whether the mineral in the final analysis be silver or galena or nickel or tin or copper, in the vision it is gold, and there has always been the saying that the dear public loves a gold mine. Besides, there is the gambling element which is ever present in the human race, to risk little and gain much; the feeling which surges through one when he has risked five dollars on a long shot in a horse race, the pull-on that leads a man to spend another dollar for ten more punches on a gift board, to play poker hands with his taxicab companion while they go home from work, using the numbers of passing license tags for their pairs and sequences.

Upon those two elements the grubstaker works, giving of his time and experience while others give of their money. Up in the North, there is more than one grubstake club, composed of from five to fifteen men, each of whom may be perhaps earning not more than a nominal salary, yet who out of that salary contributes a few dollars a week to the upkeep of some wandering man, far in the bush or penetrating the new mining districts as they spring up from the seaboard on to the agricultural districts of Mani-

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toba, and then, leaping the prairies, take new strength in far western British Columbia. It carries a thrill for these men, one perhaps a clerk in a store, another a railroad brakeman, a third a bookkeeper, the adventurous side of him a-surge as he leans over his tiresome columns of figures. It gives to them in the actuality the same sort of reaction that a shut-in receives from the reading of an adventure novel, for here they are a part and parcel of that adventure, even though four walls close them in.

“And they’ve got a chance, you know,” said my friend of the poison bottle. “There’s always the chance — especially in a country like this, where there is so much unscratched country. Sometimes I wonder when people will find out all there is to know about Canada. That’s what gives grubstaking the thrill; like some old king sending out a Columbus to find out what’s on the other side of the horizon, and wondering from day to day where he is and what he’s doing, whether he’s just killed a bear for his supply of meat or has discovered a spot of land where the veins crop out in every direction with riches on every hand. It’s a thrill for a fellow behind a counter. But then it’s a thrill for anybody. Lawyers and doctors especially; they’re awful good

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grubstakers. Don't ask me why; I don't know." He lighted a cigarette.

"Then there's the money element too. Now I work differently, in a way, but the results are about the same. I've got three partners. We haven't all been together for five years; one of us is here, another one somewhere else — I'm on the way now to meet one of 'em. First time I've seen any of the gang in two years. But we keep in touch through one or the other and we take separate districts. There's a sort of rule that a fellow makes a small stake on an average of once in four years — something he can sell, you know. Now suppose a new mining district opens up where there's been a real strike, and where there's the money to develop it. A good prospector will jump in there right away and stake as many claims as he can. But he doesn't try to work 'em himself. Instead he either tries to sell 'em to the big company or to a syndicate that's figuring on getting the money for development. Maybe he gets four or five thousand — maybe only one thousand dollars. But it's something to tie to; it lets him go out again and try to find a bonanza."

There are prospectors and prospectors; the old kind, for instance, and the new. Back in the gold-

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rush days of Nevada, California and Colorado, it didn't require much of a knowledge of rock, of formations or of topography for a man to start in search of gold, with the chance of finding it. All he needed to know was that any funny-looking rock was worth examination, and, in a way, that rule still holds. Beyond that, he had fairly open country over which to wander, with practically every mountain exhibiting at least a portion of the rock of which it was formed, with gullies created by the action of washes from the heavy mountain storms, which, at the same time, formed a sort of chute into which any erosive action upon an outcropping of ore would be carried by the wash, there to be found by the prospector, ground in the mortar which he usually carried, and then washed in a pan for colors. If the gold was there, he then began to follow the gulch, picking up more pieces of float until he came to the place where that float, or metal-bearing ore, ceased. Whereupon he looked for the outcropping. This, in variations, applied to other ores — with the exception that with lead or silver he took his sample to an assayer. His life, in a measure, was comparatively easy; he had a burro, or a string of them if he possessed the money, to carry his

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every supply. He had visible ground over which to work. He had certain simple rules to follow. But in the new country of Canada there is little of this.

In the first place, the Canadian prospector must work in a country that is comparatively flat and where an open space of rock is a rarity. Instead, there is the bush, always the bush, a tangle of alder, of spruce, of balsam and hemlock and pine and birch, of moss, of bog, of muskeg, covering practically every inch of ground that one penetrates. As far as one can tell from within the bush, everything is the same; there is no chance to survey a gully or follow the float resultant from years of washes down a mountain gulch, for the simple reason that there is no float, and there are no gullies and no mountains..

One does not load a burro with a few months' supplies and lead him where he cares. There are no burros, in the first place; and secondly, there is nowhere for a burro to go.

Thus what the independent prospector takes with him he carries by canoe and upon his back, and it is no small burden. The outfit consists of a canoe, an outboard motor, rifle, ammunition, a gold pan, mortar and pestle, rope, nails, candles, towels,

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gasoline and oil for the motor, a tool kit for the same thing, spark plugs, cooking utensils, a tent, blankets, shovels, picks, compasses, clothing, repair materials for the time when the canoe hits a rock, flour at the rate of a half pound per man a day, two hundred pounds or more of groceries, an emergency kit containing medicine and bandages to treat almost anything up to a major injury, whetstones, mosquito bar, a file or two, a light cable in case of necessity for trenching the ground where a windlass and shaft bucket are needed, and any other little knickknacks that a man would require when living and working entirely upon his own for four or five months of an utter separation from civilization. And travel in the new North is a matter of quite some uncertainty, especially when a man is hunting gold.

It's all very well when one is scooting along in his light canoe and the outboard motor is putt-putting quite satisfactorily. But all of a sudden that joy may end — in fact it does end quite consistently. If the means of passage is a river, a rapids shows its foamy surface in announcement that no canoe can pass. If a lake, it does as all lakes will do — it comes to an end. To the bank goes the canoe, thereby changing places with the former passenger. Now the

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canoe takes a ride, for a distance varying from a few hundred feet to a mile, or even two of them. One man carries the canoe and one the motor, for sensible prospectors work in pairs when they strike the bush. After they've lugged that for a mile or so, they can come back and load up with files, picks, shovels, groceries and the other little whatnots, proceeding at last until another portage becomes necessary. Portages are quite a heavy crop in the mineral country. Fifteen or twenty of them to be negotiated into an unknown district are not at all unusual. At least one gets a strong back out of prospecting, if nothing else — that and a knowledge of what big results can come from very little things; the black fly, for instance.

Any man who goes into the bush in the black-fly season, the schedule of which seems to be from the first of June until the middle of July, but which often refuses to run on that schedule, earns what gold he gets. A small affair is the black fly, but it carries weighty results. So tiny that it can move easily through almost anything except cheesecloth, it clamps itself upon one with the lightness of a toe dancer, and without interference, since it has sneaked upon the job, gets busy. It doesn't sting or

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insert a blood sucker or do any of those prosaic things. Instead, in its quiet, persuasive way, it selects a spot where the blood is close to the surface and bites a hole out of you as big as the point of a lead pencil. Then it proceeds to fill up without interference until it has absorbed enough of the fluid contents of the victim to last it until another shows up, and it literally falls off its perch from overeating. Then the blood begins to flow — and with it the oaths. And the next morning, if the black fly has selected one of its favorite spots around the eye, there's a shiner even more gorgeous than the far-famed Aladdin's wonderful lamp.

But one hears little of black flies from the prospector. They go with the country; some day when the new North has fulfilled his dream of a continuous mining camp, there'll be settlements everywhere, and the black fly, like any other woodlands pest, will be gone. Some one once coined the phrase "as hopeful as a prospector." It still holds, whether that prospector be of a far-gone generation or the present.

So, with the mosquitoes, with the black flies, with civilization gone far behind him, with the bush and the lakes and the rivers and the portages as his obstacles, with a pack which easily can weigh two hun-

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dred pounds, the prospector of the North starts upon no easy task. Along the edges of lakes, the banks of rivers, the runs of a rapids where the rocks are exposed, the fringes of islands — there is the prospector, paddling slowly, his eyes watching every exposure, and behind those eyes a wealth of information upon rock formations that would leave the ancient gold seeker gasping.

Here it is not merely a matter of seeking quartz or nuggets; he is looking at the edges of the bottom of the world, where almost any form of mineral may be his reward. And he knows rock — a five-minute talk with a Canadian prospector will leave one in a bewilderment of schists, lava flows, banded iron formations, quartzite, metamorphism, anticlines, synclines and intrusives. He will speak glibly of the Keewatin formation of the Pre-Cambrian age; the Grenville, Laurentian, Timiskamian, Haileyburian, Animikean and a few others, throwing in a few remarks on graywacke and conglomerates just to make it harder. And the thing which counts is that he knows what he is talking about, with the result that he looks for his age and his type of rock as he moves along, and when he strikes what he wants, he pulls his canoe upon the shore, turns it upside down for

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protection against the elements, puts up his tent and begins further investigations.

Quite different, indeed, from the old-time prospector with his burro, his pick and his pan, making his slow way over the mountains in his hit-and-miss journey.

But in spite of all these new-fangled things, one sometimes meets with by-products which tell him that the old days aren't wholly gone, after all. One July afternoon, I sat in the broad-benched party room of a log cabin on the Du Prat River in North Quebec. A jovial place, this log cabin, and a jovial hostess — none other in fact than a lady known, not as Lou but as Yukon Jessie.

Not fair to look upon, indeed; for Yukon Jessie, in the pursuit of her profession for the benefit of the laborers from the railroad, some ten miles away by canoe, the workmen of the Macamic road, the employes of a mine near by, and the weary prospector, halting in his journey down the Macamic for a bit of conversation, a drop of beer and other commodities — had seen more than one mine rush come and go. Besides, Yukon Jessie owned the place and had nothing to sell but straight alcohol and Montreal beer.

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That afternoon, while the mosquitoes buzzed and the murky Du Prat gave forth the putterings of an outboard motor now and then, Yukon Jessie was beerless but loquacious. She was loquacious both as to this new country and to the old, out there around Whitehorse in the Yukon, where a girl couldn't even save a thin dime, owing to the generous nature of such folk; there was always somebody needing something. And as she waxed more loquacious she waxed also enthusiastic about this new land, where the riches lay just under the muskeg or stared at one from the rocky fastnesses abutting every lake.

"Oh, it's great," she said, "this going from one new country to another. Now don't get nervous. Dan'll be here with the beer pretty soon — three barrels of it. Yep, I like this new country; always something happening and some one jolly to talk to. You know what?" she asked. "I'm going to get in a lot of booze and beer and give a picnic just for the old prospectors. I just love the old prospectors, always so jolly and so full of good stories and everything. I'm going to pick myself an island on a lake just as soon as the mosquitoes die off and I reduce some of this fat I've got on me from sittin' around so much, and just give a picnic that'll muss up the whole

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country. Yep, it's a great country up here, all new and everything."

The fast put-put of a motorboat speeding up the Du Prat put an end to her futurities. She craned her neck and looked out the open window.

"That you, Dan?"

"Yeh," came the voice from without.

"How much beer'd you bring?"

"None," said Dan.

"What?" Yukon Jessie executed a full turn. "No beer?"

"Naw, no beer!" said Dan. "They're pinchin' everybody in camp. Gone crazy or something — say they're trying to clean up the town. Had the jail full last night."

Yukon Jessie turned, her face a mixture of pale surprise and flaming indignation. Just as she did so, three mosquitoes, working in harness, lighted on a fulsome calf and began diamond-drilling for pay ore. Yukon Jessie leaned forward with an effort. She sent down a heavy hand in a gigantic slap.

"Ain't this a blankety-blank-blank-blank-of-a-blankety-blanked country?" she asked.

CHAPTER VIII

The speed with which Canada is moving is perhaps demonstrated by the previous chapter. For until four years ago, 1925, to be exact, the methods of prospecting as delineated were the invariable rule, with no indication that they ever would be changed. Out of all the years, there had been only one advancement, the use of the "kicker" or outboard canoe motor, which had extended the prospector's range of travel perhaps a hundred miles per trip. Then came the airplane, and with its arrival, a surge of new endeavor that may make Canada a greater mineral potentiality than all the rest of the world combined.

That, of course, is a big statement. Therefore, the repetition is made that Canada is a big country, the true bigness of which is just being discovered. Nor is even that extent yet known; it will be, however, with a few more years of airplane work, the beginnings of which are as romantic as any of the other formative events of the Great North. The airplane

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came about, not as an experiment, or a new phase, but as the workaday necessity which it has remained in the North, as prosaically romantic as the bull team of the pioneer crossing the desert.

The entrance of John E. Hammell, aviation's greatest exponent in Canadian mineral history, came as the result of the discovery at Red Lake, Ontario, by Lorne Howey and George McNeeley, his brother-in-law, of free gold in quartz.

This was in wilderness country. True, there was some commercial fishing on the lower end of Lac Seul, near Hudson, while at the upper end of the long lake, running to within about sixty miles of Red Lake was a Hudson's Bay Post, with another at Red Lake itself. But they were frontier stations, maintained for the fur trade.

For the prospector, Red Lake meant weeks from civilization; Lac Seul is a large and dangerous lake, with stretches of narrows in which rapids run, and with wide expanses across which the winds beat the water into dangerous whitecaps. It could only be traversed in a canoe by edging around it. Then at the end, where the little town of Gold Pines now stands, there began a series of six portages from one small lake to another, by which the bush was pene-

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trated for sixty miles more. This country showed little promise of ever being connected with civilization, and so, when Lorne Howey made his gold find, the joy of discovery was heavily discounted by future difficulties. But there was a chance for action, if he could interest one particular man who already had made a success of inveigling finance into the wilderness. Howey and McNeeley staked their ground, stripped the vein and convinced themselves that they really possessed a gold mine. Then Howey started forth in his canoe to reach civilization and a long-distance telephone, that he might argue by wire with the man he desired. When he did that, he completed a circle by which the old influence of Cobalt stepped into present-day affairs.

Up in Canada, they don't speak of him as John E. Hammell, which is his correct name. They either call him Jack Hammell or plain Jack, leaving one to infer that there is only one Jack in Canada. He is the Paul Bunyan of mining.

He came into Cobalt twenty-two years ago, a prospector. He knew more swear words, more little touches of kindness, more ability to share his last cent with another prospector than any other man in the camp. Somewhere in his wanderings he had be-

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come an expert boxer, which was another great advantage in those days, since the men of early Cobalt often settled matters without a court or a policeman. He could work harder than any three men in the camp. He was thirty years old, a stocky man with muscles of tungsten steel, and it wasn't long before his name began to be mentioned often about the camp. That prowess has grown for twenty-three years, until now he has become almost a fabulous character. As I have said, he is the Paul Bunyan of mining; fables are growing up about him even now; in years to come he will assume in the mining world the status of a Buffalo Bill or a Kit Carson. Not long ago, in The Pas, I heard a conservatively inclined man insist that Jack Hammell once had fought his way out of a pinch single-handed against twenty-five men. I didn't interrupt. I happened to know the truth. He hadn't fought his way out. He had fought his way in, and whipped not twenty-five, but nine men in doing it. One against nine is fair enough. It was the fable of having whipped ten men which gave Wild Bill Hickock much of his reputation.

It all concerned a matter of claim jumping. One morning in Cobalt, Jack started forth from his cabin

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toward the lake. He had the light of conquest in his eyes, and an air of anxiety to get at a particular job. A friend queried his excitement.

"Got a chance to make five thousand dollars," he said, without further explanation. Then he swung into his canoe and crossed the Lake Temiskaming to the trail leading to what was known as the Casey mine. Possession, during the early days, was in some cases nine points of the law; this property came under that heading. An English concern had been somewhat too conservative and had lost possession. Jack had offered to get the property back for five thousand dollars.

Once on the trail, Hammell moved swiftly for the mine, where nine men were in possession. There were no formalities or dickering. He simply walked into camp, moved to the main cabin, walked in as soon as the door was open and poked the first man he saw on the chin, knocking him out. Immediately another miner came at him, picking up a hammer handle as he ran. Jack countered by seizing a dish-pan and swinging it over his head to catch the blow of the hammer handle. Then, with his assailant off guard, he shot forth his right again to the jaw. That left seven men, three of whom still remained in the

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cabin, while the others ran forward from the shaft, some distance away.

Two of the remaining force now rushed Jack at once. He hit one of them, knocking him back against a bunk, where his head struck and where he sank unconscious. The second now was upon him, arms spread clumsily. Jack picked him up, swung him about and threw him at the cook who backed against the log wall and began to scream. A woodpile was near. Jack ran for it, picked up a heavy chunk of birch and sprang for the door.

"Who wants this alongside his head?" he shouted. The door behind him was open, revealing five men, two of whom were still unconscious, the other three were crawling dolefully to their feet. Nobody seemed to want the chunk of wood.

"Then get off this place and stay off!" Jack shouted, and lugging their wounded, a mining camp departed.

That wasn't all. Jack held his claim. They sent other men against him; Jack either outfought or outwitted them. Finally, they learned of a strong man who had drifted into the Cobalt region from a circus. They sent him in. Jack met him on the trail. The strong man looked at Jack Hammell, dancing

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about on his toes and feinting for an opening. Jack meanwhile looked at the strong man. Finally they both grinned.

"What do we want to fight for?" asked Jack.
"Suppose you come here and work for me?"

They shook hands. After that, the ousted company gave up hope. There seemed little use in trying to beat the combination of a Mad Hatter and a strong man.

Of course, that wasn't the reason Loren Howey wanted Jack to solve his problem at Red Lake. That concerned a mining region known as the Flin Flon in northern Manitoba, nearly a hundred miles north of The Pas.

After Hammell had held his client's property long enough to assure its possession, he turned to mining ventures of his own. He did much to start the new city of Elk Lake, to the south of Cobalt. He dabbled in other mines. He broke all the rules of mining by hiring prospectors and paying them a monthly wage and a part of their find, which was entirely outside the rules. In those days, mining engineers were known as yellowlegs by the prospectors, mining magnates by much less complimentary names, and prospectors, in the minds of the opposite factions,

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were gracefully accepted as "bush tramps." A prospector's job seemed mainly to go out and endure all the hardships possible, find a mine and then get trimmed out of it. For a man to actually pay prospectors was outrageous. But the prospectors liked it. More than that, they got the habit of hunting up Jack Hammell when they needed a few dollars, sending for him when they got in jail, and conferring with him when a new idea bobbed up about the mineral potentialities of a certain country. By this time, Jack was comparatively a rich man from dealing in mining claims and town sites; Elk Lake, South Porcupine, Payroll Townsite and others all were handled through Hammell's hands, to say nothing of a dozen or so mines in the region; a man successful at turning big mines makes money quickly. So, in 1915, when Dan and Johnny Mosher, Leon and Isador Dion, Dan Milligan and Tom Creighton heard stories of gold in the Beaver Lake country north of The Pas, they went to Jack Hammell for a grubstake. They were partners, these six men; they'd trapped and prospected together for years.

In went the six men, and shortly afterward out one came with a report of having found gold. Up

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went Jack, a journey of nearly fourteen days by boat, canoe and portage. He looked at the gold mine and sniffed.

"Is that the best you can do?" he asked.

"Well," said Tom, "I thought you'd like to have a look at it."

"I've looked," said Jack. There wasn't much to do but go back. That night, around the camp fire, the conversation wandered. At last, Tom Creighton said, just by way of information:

"There's a sulphide deposit back here in the bush that would be mighty fine if it were nearer civilization. It's no good to anybody away out here though."

They were a hundred miles from the nearest steel at The Pas. This was the true wilderness; one portage alone on the journey between here and The Pas was eighteen miles in length. But Hammell decided to have a look.

A rusty streak showed in the exposed Pre-Cambrian, in places nearly a hundred feet wide. It stretched on and on, to be sighted at exposed spots for nearly a half a mile, — a deposit, so the samples showed, of copper and small quantities of gold. Hammell poked about for nearly an hour. Then he looked toward Tom.

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"Tell you boys what I'll do with this," he said. "How much do you think would fix each of you up for the rest of your lives?"

"Well," said one of them, "I've always had an ambition to own a hundred thousand dollars."

"That's a go," said Jack. "I'll get you each a hundred thousand dollars for your end and a million or so for myself, since I'm the grubstaker. How's that?"

They said it was fine, but they laughed at him when they said it. A hundred miles from civilization in the Canadian bush is a different thing from a hundred miles on the prairie or even in the mountains. But Jack Hammell was serious.

It took six years for Hammell to make good. During that time, he traded the mine to three separate houses in New York, all of them big names in Wall Street. Once he got several hundred thousand dollars for development by hiring the suite of a millionaire in one of New York's largest hotels and giving a dinner at which he refused even to speak about his mine. The minute the dinner was over he gave up the suite and left word at the desk that he was "out." The next day, he appeared at the brokerage offices and blandly informed the men with whom he was

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dealing that he didn't care to show any figures or facts concerning his project. If they wanted to take a three-million-dollar option on the mine, he'd consent to take fifty thousand dollars to bind the bargain. But he didn't care to wait for them to send engineers, he didn't intend, in fact, to do any of the things which men who sell mines are supposed to do.

"Then you ask us to buy a mine, sight unseen, for three million dollars?"

"Something like that," answered Jack casually. "Take it or leave it."

Wall Street has a reputation for being hard-boiled. Here was some one who was even more so; the attack was so unusual that the brokerage firm wired for the advice of an expert, one of the biggest figures in American mining. He answered from San Francisco:

"Go ahead. If any confidence man can come in and put over a deal like that, count me in for ten thousand dollars."

Jack left New York the next day with an initial payment of fifty thousand dollars. More money followed, to the extent of a hundred thousand dollars. But even with this amount stuck into the ground for

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diamond drilling, for proving up the vein, and for the hundred and one other primary necessities of a big mine, the firm at last gave it up. A hundred miles from a railroad was too big a handicap. Jack had the mine back on his hands, with six prospectors to support, and a promise of wealth unfulfilled. So back he went to New York.

This time he optioned the thing for millions, with four hundred thousand dollars advance for development. It meant years of labor; the dragging of machinery over the snow, the lugging in of diamond-drilling machinery by canoe and finally the use of dog teams. To my knowledge, this was the first time that dog teams were used in the actual development of a mine; day after day and week after week they ran the bush, with heaped toboggans of supplies behind them, while horses followed the broken trail with heavier machinery. By summer, machinery went in by canoe, often to be dragged by hand over the portages, snubbed from tree to tree in the grueling progress, while Jack Hammell labored with the rest. In winter the march continued over snow and ice; a shaft was sunk, the diamond drill explored deeper and deeper into the ground. But at last came an end. The war with Germany was demanding re-

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sources closer home, and an American magnate summoned Hammell to New York.

"I can't go through with it," he said. "Here are your papers, everything you've ever given me. Take the mine back and sell it to somebody else — and good luck to you."

"But about that four hundred thousand dollars?" asked Hammell. "It's spent."

The magnate smiled.

"How long did it take you to get that machinery in there?"

"Two years."

"It's a good place to leave it then, isn't it? The next time you sell the mine, you've got something to sell with it."

So Jack started forth once more to peddle a mine and this time it was the Mining Corporation of Canada, which later affiliated with the Whitney interests. Jack got his million or more. The prospectors got their hundred thousand dollars apiece. Now, Jack had no mine to bother him, no dog teams to sleep with, no teamsters to drive on to dangers and labors in the bush by sheer force — once he fought a man and whipped him, only to learn later that his opponent was wanted for triple murder. But all this

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was over now. Here was a man with nothing but a million dollars and no excitement. Then the long-distance telephone rang.

It was a week later that Jack Hammell, Cooney Wood and Alex Gillies, one of the original stakers of the Acme mine which is now a part of the tremendous Hollinger at Timmons, stood beside the Howey-McNeeley claims at Red Lake.

"Trouble with this place," said Jack, "it's too far from the railroad."

"That's what they said at Flin Flon," Gillies cut in. "But look at the place now — a railroad going in there, water power, twenty odd million dollars being spent on construction!"

"Um-humph!" said Jack. "And I slept for six years with the dogs on the trail to start it. Six years is too long to buck any trail. Say," said Jack belligerently, "I'm getting close to fifty. I'm tired of mushing trails. It was all right when you and I could lick our weight in wildcats at Cobalt. But we're not spring chickens any more. Nope," he concluded, "it's too far from a railroad."

"But — "

"Will you let me finish?" asked Jack. "I'm trying to say that it's too far from a railroad to mush in

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here with dogs and teams. Flin Flon was only a hundred miles; this is nearer two hundred. I've got a better idea. I'll open up this cock-eyed country!" he said. "And it won't take any six years, either. We've got a couple of months before freeze-up. We'll be working here inside of two weeks." Then he winked. "Airplanes."

"Who'll furnish 'em?"

"I'll get 'em," answered Jack.

He did. He went back to Toronto, walked blandly into the Parliament Building and to the Premier's office. There he borrowed them, five Ontario Forestry Service airplanes, together with their pilots, from the Provincial Government!

The loan of government airplanes to assist at the birth of a new district like Red Lake may be construed into the belief that the Government in the Dominion may be called upon for direct assistance by any one who has an ax to grind, or whose private business may need a prop in time of stress. That is not true.

The same reasons applied here that caused the United States to give grants of land to the early railroads, building across the continent. The opening of a mine at Red Lake meant the pushing back of the

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frontier for a hundred and sixty miles north of the Canadian National transcontinental line, a steel boundary which, until recent years, civilization has hesitated to cross, especially in the deep-bush country of western Quebec and the vast stretches of Ontario. Here was an opportunity to establish a new city and a new base of investigation at a place which otherwise might remain the habitat of the bear, the wolf and the bull-moose.

So the five big airplanes roared forth to the carrying of primary supplies — it was necessary to transport some twenty thousand pounds of materials into camp before freeze-up. Before the job was over, Jack Hammell found he had done something more than merely provide for a winter's work. He had started the most spectacular mining rush since the Klondike.

A ghost-story camp, this patch that is called Red Lake. Perhaps that is what made it so romantic. It seems inevitable that there should be always a ghost story to boom gold; perhaps the recital of the old prospector, dying upon his bed of spruce boughs, and in his final paroxysms coughing up the gold nuggets which he had swallowed to prevent any one ever discovering his riches. Or the ghost which ap-

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peared in the shape of a vague light, leading some prospector on and on, at last to disappear into the ground, where, the next morning, the pursuer discovered ten-pound hunks of gold at the very grass roots. Or the cows which once wandered where Cripple Creek later burst upon the world, the hunter who roamed in from what later became the Tonopah district and tossed a sample of ore into an assay office, there to lie for a full year before it was examined. Always the story — and Red Lake had it.

Upon the edge of Goose Island, in Lac Seul, on the way to Red Lake from the railroad station at Hudson, stands a large cross upon a rock, and prospectors as they pass often raise their hats to it. It is in memory of two men who died because of Red Lake, but they were not the first. Long ago, so the story goes — nearly forty years, in fact — two other men struggled through the wilderness to Slate Bay, along the northern shore of Red Lake, and there found something which induced them, with a moose hide for a shaft bucket and a windlass built from the bush about them, to sink a shaft. Perhaps they died, perhaps they didn't. No one even seems to know their identity. Then, years afterward, a government geologist, making his way through this far

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North Country, paused in his journey at the edge of the vegetation-fringed shaft. He staked the ground as a mining claim. Soon he would come back and do his necessary assessment work. But he didn't, and in time he died also. Red Lake remained undiscovered.

But the ghost story was out — the tale of that yawning mine shaft, dug there nearly forty years ago. At last three prospectors, Johnson, White and Conn, went in to search for it. They didn't find the shaft, but they found gold along the shores of Red Lake and staked six claims. Back to Winnipeg they went and found two backers. But one died before the first year's assessment work was done, and the other followed him in death before the second year rolled by. They found a third, a lawyer named Elliott. But before they could go in, Elliot also was dead.

Stories of hard luck travel swiftly. The ghost camp of Red Lake was becoming more widely known, and prospectors are sometimes superstitious. What great lodes lay there that the fates should throw the shroud of death about those who strove to break the barrier? There was more to come. The Canadian National sent in two men, E. L. Murray

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and Captain Christopher Kelly, K.C., of Winnipeg, to look over the ground about which there had been so much whispering. At last they moved down along the slow route of portages and lakes from Red Lake, to Keg Lake, thence through the Gull Rock and the Pagwash at last to breast the heavy waters of the sixty-mile-long Lac Seul on the last lap of their journey to Hudson. But canoes are frail and November winds are strong on Seul. Wandering Chippewas found one body when the break-up came the next spring; the resting place of the other remains a mystery of that mysterious place, the bush. And to memory a cross stands there, upon a bare rock, a cross beside the pathway of gold.

Death had done almost sufficient press-agenting now. In went a geological outfit in 1923, to make a full report which was published in 1925. Following this, Howey and McNeeley staked their claims.

Added to the romantic history of the place, once work had started, there was a psychological angle to the use of airplanes which had not been taken into consideration. Aircraft carried the thought of a necessity for terrific speed. If airplanes were being used, then this must be such a tremendous find that

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the discoverers were turning to desperate means in an effort to seize everything before the other fellow got in.

Rumors spread, of gold at the grass roots, vast chunks of the yellow metal in milk-white quartz; there were hints that every returning airplane was bringing out secret shipments of high-grade ore. The owner of two commercial airplanes heard of it and shot his Curtiss machines in to Hudson, for a short spasm of work before freeze-up should end their activity. Their arrival found also the vanguard of the rush awaiting, and eager to pay a dollar a pound for transportation into the new era. Staking of claims began; more rumors emerged. The truth was that Red Lake showed good possibilities and a little more; only now is it emerging into true prominence as a gold camp, and for a year or so after the primary discoveries, there were many times when doubt was heavy as to its future.

Those cold facts went forth at the same time as the rumors of riches, but they were disbelieved. Why was there such a need for airplanes if this were not the greatest gold camp in the world? The rush continued; soon claim stakes began to make their appearance everywhere about the discovery site. Then

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freeze-up came and the airplanes halted their activities.

There was no cessation, however, in the influx of the gold-fevered men who now were arriving from every part of Canada and the United States. Six months before, Hudson had been little more than a signal stop on the Canadian National, for the fish trade and freight from Hudson's Bay posts. Now hotels were building, and other unpainted buildings splotching the sides of the newly denuded hills where the bush had been cut away, to be as quickly transformed into lumber.

A trade in dogs began to spring up — the word of a dog famine at the foot of Lac Seul had spread almost as quickly as that of gold. Every train brought its complement of sledge dogs, ordinary dogs, mongrels, huskies, big dogs, small dogs and intermediate. The star-splotched, zero nights echoed to an obligato which began with the rising of the moon and did not halt until daylight came grudgingly in the late morning hours; the eerie, wailing cry of the huskies in solos, duets, quartettes and mass formations. It made little difference to the town; few people slept anyway, except spasmodically. Gold puts a queer craze into a man's veins; it is a surer stimulant

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than strychnine; one's heart pumps feverishly, urging the body to greater efforts, and the mind to concentrate upon one thing alone — gold — gold — gold!

Day after day, the sledge teams went forth to a frigid journey across the ice. There were men who had never driven dogs before; there were old mushers, sourdoughs from the Klondike, looking commiseratingly upon the tenderfoot who wouldn't know the first thing to do at the gold regions. But tenderfoot and sourdough had about the same chance; the snow was from a foot to six feet deep in the vicinity of Red Lake now; one claim was as good as another. Besides, Red Lake was almost out of the reckoning. Stakes were beginning to show miles away; in Red Lake itself was a newly erected street of tents belonging to the crew of a recorder's office, rushed in from Toronto to handle the filing of claims. A line of men was before it day and night. Claims were bought and sold without even an investigation of their location; some of them were sixty-five miles away from the original find. Lac Seul, viewed from an eminence, was a stretch of white, broken for miles by heavy cracks of black — the line of men and dog teams, mushing away the

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frigid miles from Hudson to the New Golconda. About that time another element entered.

Among the first to go into Red Lake had been a young aviator who, with a partner or two, had made the trip in by canoe. He was Captain Harold Anthony Oaks, who, after having served his bit as a member of the Royal Flying Corps and the Royal Air Force in France where he had been a fighting instructor, had come back to Canada and joined the Forestry Service as a pilot. Then gold had called him and he had rushed to Red Lake, there to stake some claims with his partners and move for civilization as quickly as possible by canoe that he might sell them while the market was good.

This had been accomplished and Captain Oaks had looked again toward Red Lake, but this time as an aviator. Dog teams were slow — a week was excellent time for the journey into Red Lake, and that only if the dogs were strong and the drivers knew their business. Besides this, they were expensive; a good leader or an experienced swing dog — the one next to the toboggan — easily was worth a hundred and fifty dollars. Teams were piling up along the way; there had been accidents and per-

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sons frozen; a Red Cross unit, in fact, had been sent to Hudson to provide temporary hospital facilities for those whom gold had hurt instead of helped. Besides, business had been good with those other two planes. Oaks took his money and organized the Patricia Airways Company Limited.

It was, in fact, exceedingly limited. There was money enough for one plane, a Curtiss Lark which arrived with the equipment of Norwegian skis. Nobody knew much about winter flying except in districts where landings could be made on wheels in the same manner as at any other time of the year. There had been little necessity or opportunity for it in Canada; the need for Forestry Service planes ended in October with the cessation of the fire season just before freeze-up, and that done, there was no place for airplanes to go.

Besides, this is hydroplane country; there are few airplanes in Canada that are not equipped for landing on water; the country, in fact, is one tremendous landing field of lakes. But those lakes are frozen in winter; still good landing fields, they preclude the use of wheels, which, striking crust snow or drifts, would inevitable "wash out" the landing gear or crack up the plane generally. The

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Lark arrived and the new owners of the Patricia Airways Company Extremely Limited, took her out on the lake and spun her over. The engine responded marvellously. But she couldn't lift her feet. The Norwegian skis insisted on remaining right on the surface of the lake.

This left Oaks without much precedent. Flying into mining camps where conditions were primitive had been limited to some work which the Laurentide Company had done in Rouyn a year before, when passengers had been carried from Haileybury into the little log-cabin town on Lake Osisko. But that had been summer flying too.

"What she needs is snowshoes," Oaks decided finally. So he looked about for a snowshoe maker.

There was one in Sioux Lookout, down the line from Hudson. Oaks took the Lark there to buy her a new pair of shoes. The snowshoe maker knew as much about airplanes as most persons who live in the bush — which is nothing. But he did know skis and snowshoes; various designs were attempted. At last the Lark taxied out upon the lake upon a pair of skis that responded even more quickly than pontoons. The take-off was quicker, landing was easier than upon water. The problem of winter fly-

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ing in the wilderness had been solved. But the Patricia Airways continued to be limited. There were many prospectors, engineers, and uneducated gold seekers, all anxious to get into Red Lake. But by this time, there was also a glut in the dog market.

Every returning party, once its staking had been done — ten thousand claims were entered at the recorder's office that winter — lost interest in dogs immediately it got back to Hudson and the railway. Expert dog mushers, whole families in some instances, had moved in and begun competition. Dogs which had sold for one hundred and fifty dollars apiece in the boom days of the husky now could be bought for fifteen dollars or less from boomers just back from the wilderness and willing to sell out cheap rather than to pay express on canines back to some place where they wouldn't be needed. One could buy a dog team, use it for a week or a month and sell it again for little less than he had paid for it. Tractors too had arrived and were beating down a road to Red Lake with tremendous loads of supplies. When the spring break-up came, the profit and loss column of the Patricia Airways Company were so closely associ-



A TRACTOR TRAIN IN THE BUSH OF NORTHERN QUEBEC

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ated that Oaks was forced to put up the Lark as security at a bank in return for money enough to buy a set of pontoons and a car of gas for the summer trade. By that time, the word had passed around that Red Lake wasn't a new Klondike, after all. More than two thirds of the persons who had rushed in there so wildly to stake their claims in the snow did not even return to do the development work necessary to gain possession of the ground under the Canadian mining laws.

Business for the Lark was slack. But in the meanwhile, seasoned prospectors had scented that this country, extending from Red Lake to Birch Lake, Woman Lake, Little Trout Lake and still onward to what is now a distinct chain of lakes running for nearly two hundred and fifty miles along a small height of land eastward through the Patricia district, was true gold country. Here and there men of experience had made finds, in some instances of free gold in quartz. There were porphyry dikes and intrusions, which to prospectors, means the presence somewhere of gold. There were "stringers" and "leads" and chalcopyrites. So the experienced ones had moved onward. Captain Oaks didn't have much to do one day. With some friends, he took

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the Lark out upon a jaunt, some two hundred miles deeper into the wilderness. They too found some stringers of gold-bearing quartz. They were back in civilization and had sold their claims in less time than it had taken other prospectors to even make the trip to regions much closer. Captain Oaks decided that there was only one way to prospect — by airplane.

So he, like Howey, went to Jack Hammell. But Hammell was extremely busy about that time. The company to which he had optioned the original mine in Red Lake had given it back to him, and he was in the throes of another set of activities extremely remindful of the Flin Flon. So Captain Oaks tried to interest others. The idea was too fantastic. He gave it up for awhile and went to something nearer comprehension, the finding of backers for what is now one of the big commercial projects of Canada — the Western Canada Airways. But the idea of prospecting by air stuck with him. Again he went back to Jack Hammell and for a second and third time. Finally, a little more than a year ago, Oaks found Hammell with his troubles at Red Lake ended.

“All right, Kid,” said Jack, “You’ve started some-

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thing. Tear down to New York and buy some airplanes. I'll get the prospectors."

That was about the first of March, 1928. What has followed in that space of little more than a year gives perhaps the best picture possible of the speed with which the airplane is developing as an integral factor of mining.

The company which Jack Hammell and Oaks started is only one of several now, to say nothing of the independent mining companies which this year purchased airplanes for their own use, and are sending men into the bush to establish camps and look over ground long considered beyond the reach of the prospector. The original company has flown more than two hundred thousand miles. Between the various companies, the entire north of Canada has been "populated"; at least a dozen regions have been investigated that had never before seen a white man. All this was done in spite of a late start, not because of a lack of money or planes, but because prospectors wouldn't fly!

CHAPTER IX

Most of the things that have been published about the peculiarities of the prospector as a breed, are true. He is a holdover from a day of "characters"; his life has been one of the few forms of industry that has been left unstandardized. Most of all, he has a mind of his own; it is his persistency, his constant return to a country which, to the mining engineer and even the geologist, holds no hope of metals, that sometimes makes big mines. Bull-headed, determined, set in his ideas and mannerisms from long years of solitary life, he often presents all the pliability of Vermont granite. Little Whitey was a good example of that.

Little Whitey worked for Jack Hammell in the Flin Flon. Then he disappeared into the bush and no one heard from him for two years. One day Jack happened to be in Toronto in his usual suite at the King Edward. The telephone rang.

"There's a fellow down here who says he knows you," the clerk announced. "He wants a room

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in the hotel. He says his name is Little Whitey."

"That's all right," Jack said. "I'll stand good for him."

"That's not the point. He's got a couple of Indians with him."

"Indians? What's he want with Indians?"

"Well," said the voice, "he wants to take them into the room with him. One of them is an old fellow, and we wouldn't mind that. But the other is a young squaw. He says he's going to marry her."

"What's that?" Jack gasped. Then: "You send Little Whitey up here. I want to talk to him!"

Up came Little Whitey and the old buck and the Indian girl with him. The girl was pretty, all done up in deer skin, her brown eyes shining with the natural excitement of a girl transported from the wilderness to the wonders of a city. Little Whitey bowed them in, and, seating himself, raised his moccasined feet to a table.

"Shoot!" he said. "You've got something on your mind. Let's hear it." Then with a nod toward his companions. "That's all right; they're straight from the bush. Can't understand a word of English."

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Jack strode forward and shook his fist under Little Whitey's pug nose.

"The idea!" he exclaimed. "A man like you, who's had the opportunity of study, and who has a chance in the world, wrecking your whole life by turning squaw man! I'm ashamed of you! Why don't you pick yourself out a nice, pretty, white girl?"

"She's pretty, ain't she?" asked Little Whitey.

"Yes, but she's an Indian. She comes from up in that old whaling country. No telling how many breeds she's got mixed up in her blood. Get yourself a white girl."

"Who? Me?" asked Little Whitey. "And then have her sit around while I wait on her? Say, listen; I'm a prospector. I haven't got any time to be doing a lot of things around camp for a woman. Now her," he nodded toward the blank-eyed girl, "she's useful as well as ornamental. She can make moccasins for me, or tan a moosehide, or do the work around camp while I'm following up a good lead. You ought to see her in a canoe; she can hook water as good as any man I know. Do her part on a portage too; I've see her pack a hundred and fifty pounds and never let out a grunt."

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"But she's an Indian!" he argued.

"That's why she's useful," answered Little Whitey.

Thus the argument continued. Jack spoke feelingly of the foolishness of mixing races. He talked of the unfairness to a possible second generation. He pictured Little Whitey beyond the pale of white society because he had turned squaw man. It accomplished nothing. Then Jack tried a final argument.

"Look here, Whitey," he said. "You're just infatuated with that girl now because she's pretty. How long will she stay that way? I'll tell you. Just about five years more! Don't argue with me; I've seen Indians for the last twenty years. They're pretty as a picture until they're about twenty-five and then they begin to spread. How'll you feel then — how'll you feel when she loses that girlish figure and spreads all over the map?"

Little Whitey rose. He clenched his fist and pounded the table.

"I'll tell you how I'll feel!" he said. "If she spreads until she's as big as a hippopotamus, I'll love every pound of her!"

So Jack took the verdict and called a minister.

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When a prospector gets his mind made up, that's usually the end of it. That was what nearly wrecked aerial exploration in Canada. The prospectors had made up their minds that these new-fangled things were dangerous, and they refused to go into the air!

There was too much risk in this projected method, they said. The airplane presented a definite picture of danger; it was new, untried as a weapon against the wilderness. The prospector could not conceive of it going safely into places where no one ever had been before, finding a landing place, delivering its cargo, departing and then coming back and finding the men whom it had left there perhaps a month previous.

In vain was the system explained, that every prospecting unit should be equipped with a large, yellow flag which could be recognized from the air, that every Northern Aerial Mineral Explorations Company airplane would be painted deep orange and black, so that it could be as easily seen from the ground and not confused with some other ship which might be making a trip over the bush, thus giving a check-system of communication between the two. The thing that the prospector

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couldn't understand was how an aviator could take men to one lake out of thousands, drop them there, and find his way back again when the time came to bring those men in. That was all explained, by aviator's calculations to which the prospectors listened intently and of which they absorbed — nothing.

As far as the ships themselves went, they did not cause much fear; the men would take short hops in them and apparently enjoy the sensation. But they wouldn't move from the home base. Even the thought of finding new gold mines under swifter and better conditions could not budge them.

"All I see to do is kidnap 'em," said Jack Hammell one day. "It wouldn't be the first time."

For the new problem, just like everything else which is happening in Canada to-day, seemed to have a relationship to old Cobalt. Rather, it was at the old Monroe claims at Elk Lake, deep in the bush above Cobalt, and reached at that time by a tortuous journey from Latchford. Jack was working a silver mine there at the time, and he needed men. Workers, however, didn't like the idea of going into the bush. So one night when a friend met up with him in Latchford — as usual in those days,

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it was in the bar of Jim Kingston's hotel — he had a desperate light in his eye.

"Introduce me to your friends," he said. "I'm honing to buy a drink."

The "friends" had been such since about four o'clock that afternoon. There was Sergeant Dorsey, and Jack Byrne, and Mike Callahan and a few others whose brogue was getting thicker with every drink. They'd come over from the old sod not so long before, and they were thinking strongly about going back. This was no land for an Erin man, said Sergeant Dorsey, what with no place to sleep, and no food worth eating, tough meat and sow-belly. Jack bought a drink and listened sympathetically. Then he bought more drinks. Suddenly, however, he snapped his fingers and hurried for the old hand-ring telephone in the hall.

"Hello!" he shouted, holding down the hook all the time, "is this John the Butcher's? Listen, where is that saddle of lamb that you were going to send up to my camp? I don't want any excuses; I want that lamb! I told you I wanted a saddle of lamb every week. And I don't want any more beef like you sent me last week, either. What's that? Can't hear you. I know all that, but I told you I didn't

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care what it cost, but that I wanted a side of young beef every week, and that I wouldn't stand for any tough meat. Didn't I tell you that?" he asked beligerently.

"Sure," said Sergeant Dorsey to Jack's friend, "he feeds well! And does he own a mine?"

Oh, a big mine! Jack had just stripped the vein. He wasn't sure whether he had a bonanza or a lemon. The voice from the hall went on.

"And something more: won't you please get it into your head that I want this *every* week? A saddle of young lamb, and a side of young beef, tender young beef. Huh? Oh, you'll replace that other order. Fine!"

Then he called the grocer.

"I said navel oranges. N-a-v-e-l, navel oranges, the ones without the seeds. Give me a case of those, and two barrels of apples; those tart ones for pies. Got any cookies this week? Any of those chocolate-covered vanillas?"

"And is he good to his men?" asked Mr. Callahan.

"You hear him doing the ordering," the friend answered. Jack presumably hung up the telephone and immediately called another number. This time

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it was an outfitter's store to say that he wanted a better trade of blankets on the next shipment from the ones that had been sent up before. Yes, he knew those other blankets were good, but he wanted the best. After awhile, he came back into the bar and joined the party, saying nothing whatever of his telephonic conversations. Sergeant Dorsey cleared his throat and edged forward, Mr. Callahan, Mr. Byrne and the others behind him.

"What wages are ye payin' up your way these days?" he asked. Hammell told him. It was slightly better than average. "And where is it?"

Jack waved a hand nonchalantly.

"Oh, just around the bend of the river," he said.

Two days later, wet, bedraggled, they were still looking for that bend in the river. Not one of them knew how to paddle a canoe. Jack had taken his friend along to help him and they had the bunch loaded between them in an eighteen-foot freighter, as miserable a bunch of Irishmen as ever left home. It had rained since the moment they started; they had made wet camps, they had portaged, they had gone from river to lake and lake to river in an endless succession. Finally, in a rapids, a floating log nearly capsized them.

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"And wasn't that a big log?" asked Mr. Callahan.

"The likes of ye!" snorted Sergeant Dorsey. "Don't ye know a side of fresh, tinder beef when you see one? And that thing floatin' after it, wasn't that a saddle of young lamb, sitting on top of a case of naaavel oranges?"

That was all that ever was said. Once at the camp — which hadn't been erected yet — they wallowed through muskeg to their waists, slept in wet blankets and finally made a livable place for themselves. Only once in the whole summer did they stray forth. They went into town proper, Elk Lake, where there were some twenty "blind pigs." Starting at the first one, they confiscated the entire supply of liquor and beat up the owner instead of paying him. Then they went to the next one, and did the same thing. After that, they continued with the entire twenty. By the time riot was over, there were Hammell miners strung about the entire lake. Jack was four days rounding them up, at a crucial time for the mine. But when he remonstrated, Sergeant Dorsey only fixed him with a very bleary eye:

"Hasn't a man a right to mourn for a side

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of beef?" he asked, and the account was square.

Naturally, nothing like this could be accomplished with the newer recalcitrants. But as he reminisced, Jack got an idea.

"There's that new plane in New York," he said and hurried for Captain Oaks. They were at Red Lake then.

The two of them flew out that night. A week later, a brilliantly painted Super-Fairchild, gold and black, a cabin job, circled over Red Lake, came gracefully down to a landing and then taxied to shore, while the whole camp ran forward to greet it. Out stepped Jack, dressed as if he had just left Broadway. Then with exaggerated graciousness, he assisted a woman, also dressed in city clothing, from the cabin. It was Mrs. Hammell. After that Captain Oaks got out and with the same knightliness extended a hand to his own wife, also dressed as though she had never heard of a place like this, a hundred and eighty miles in the bush. Jack turned the women over to Captain Oaks, who walked away with them toward camp. Then Hammell turned to the gawking crowd of prospectors.

"Well, Boys," he said, "we had a great trip. Took off from New York yesterday morning and

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came right on across, with only one stop. Right straight across, and the girls enjoyed it every foot of the way." Suddenly his manner changed, and one of the most glorious exhibitions of cursing one ever heard flowed from his lips. "Now, you bums!" he finished. "Are you such cowards that you won't travel in a thing that even women aren't afraid of?"

After that, the matter of prospecting Canada by air took a sudden spurt. Within two weeks, there were forty men in the bush, scattered from Hudson Bay to the Northwest Territories, and sixty more, chafing to be started. Once initiated, the prospector became as excited about riding to work in an airplane as a Boston bulldog is excited about riding in a motor car. Incidentally, that is the change the airplane has wrought; the prospector now rides to work.

Just what this means is only truly appreciated by one who has known the trials of the old-time prospector in the bush. To tell the truth, Canada is just about to be truly prospected for the first time. The vast mines which already have been discovered — and that includes everything from the smallest to the giant Frood — weren't the result

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of prospecting. They came about either as the result of accident or of a summer's travel.

In a way, that is an unfair statement, but in a greater sense it is the absolute truth. Canada has been traveled by prospectors, but it has not been prospected. I believe the future will demonstrate that the prospectors who have attempted to cover the mineral-bearing districts of Canada in the past have passed up a hundred times as much mineral as they have found. Nor is that a reflection upon the prospector. It simply represents the price of the system by which he was forced to work. Here is the reason:

A man can only investigate one certain portion of territory a year by the old method. Usually that place is one where it is necessary to enter and investigate by canoe, which means that a start cannot possibly be made before late April, after the break-up. Then with his partner and his outfit for the summer, the start is made upon a summer's journey.

In these times of swift travel, it seems inconceivable that any place could exist where a progress of twenty miles a day would be called excellent. Yet almost any prospector under the old system

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would be more than happy to be assured of that amount of ground gained for every day in the bush. More often that distance is cut in two — it is not unusual for prospectors to consume a month in penetrating even a hundred miles into the bush. Summer is at its deepest when a desired point is reached, ground foliage is in thick leaf; a burden of vegetation has been added to the other screens which hide a mineral outcropping from human eyes.

More than that, there is always the reminder that freeze-up is on the way and that a start must be made out to civilization again before lakes scum or rivers suddenly congeal overnight with the clamping down of winter's first attack. Therefore, at least half the time consumed by the prospector is used, not in looking for minerals, but merely in getting to where he is going and coming back again. Nor does he know until the summer is over whether he has played a lose or win. Then, with his samples, he comes to civilization, and perhaps finds that the vein he has worked all summer to strip, prospect, or to sink a shaft on, possesses a total value of about eighty-three cents a ton. Perhaps, five hundred yards away was a streak of ore that did not look so good but which possessed paying

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minerals. But he has stuck with the most likely appearing vein; it will take another year for him to investigate other potentialities of the district. That's why I say that Canada has been traveled and not prospected. It's different with an airplane.

Last summer, for instance, four prospectors were sent as a sort of a flying squadron to check up on a number of rumors of minerals at various places in the Dominion. First of all, they were jumped from Sioux Lookout, in the Patricia district of Ontario, to The Pas, in Northern Manitoba, and from there to the Rottenstone Lake region, where their airplanes swooped down to the lake, taxied around it until the pilots decided upon a smooth, sandy beach for a landing place, and then moved into camp. Airplanes, in prospecting, incidentally, work in pairs for the same reason that prospectors work in pairs — so that if an accident happens, the uninjured plane can either give help or go for assistance. It is worth mentioning, too, that out of the six hundred and thirty thousand miles flown by all types of exploration and transportation airplanes operating into the bush of Canada in 1928, there was not a major accident resulting either in the loss of men or supplies.

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Of course, there is a good reason for this; it lies in the topographical conditions of the country. True it is that Canada, north of the line of the Transcontinental, is continued wilderness. But it is also true that practically every five miles of this bush country possesses at least one lake that is large enough for landing purposes.

More than that, the pilot who trains for work in the bush does so upon the assumption that every landing is a forced one. Therefore if something does happen in the air and he is compelled to glide for a landing, he is doing little more than he does at any other time; in fact, he is only making a regular landing. With landing fields so close that any sensible flying height puts a man within gliding distance of one, there is not much danger of cracking up. That means a great deal in the conquering of the wilderness — the biggest menace of all, airplane hazard, has been removed to a degree greater than in any other country in the world.

But to get back to that prospecting job. Once the crew was landed, it became the usual type of prospectors again, with every possible convenience. Every supply had been landed for comfort: tent, bedding rolls, food and a sectional canoe which

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can be carried in a comparatively small space, fitted together and tested before the airplane departs. Then the plane left, to come back in two weeks, either to get the men if they wanted to leave, or to pick up samples. For the airplane under the new system is something more than a carrier of human freight. It is a messenger boy.

In the old days, a man never knew what he had found until the season was over. Under the new system, it is not unusual for him to receive an almost daily report of the progress of a vein toward a paying mine. Last year, for instance, there was a great deal of interest in a new district of Patricia. Not only were airplane prospectors working in the country, but a number of other men operating under the old handicaps, which the airplanes of the exploration company speedily helped to eradicate. Since the planes were carrying out samples for their own men, it was decided to do the same for others on a freightage basis. Ports of call were established, the prospectors would bring in their samples, tag them and leave them, returning to their camps in the bush. Then in a few days they would go back to the particular lake at which the airplane called, and find there an assayer's re-

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port, depicting just what their samples had portrayed.

That saving of time is only one of the great things the airplane had accomplished. A greater one concerns the morale of men; the time is approaching when one of the real penalties of the wilderness will have been eradicated — the horror of being “bushed.”

It is nothing to-day to drop down upon some lake, a thousand miles from civilization and find in camp there, a clean-shaven, alert prospector, reading the latest magazine, or able to discuss some new problem which has just arisen before the world. The answer to the latter, of course, is the high-powered radio-receiving set, which, denied to the old-time prospector because of its weight and the necessity for careful handling, could not easily be carried in a canoe or lugged over the portages. But with an airplane carrying the freight, the radio goes along with every party that enters the bush; thus the world goes with that party too. There are no more enthusiastic prize-fight audiences than those men, sometimes fifteen hundred miles away from the nearest railroad, who gather under the Northern Lights to listen to the round-by-round recital of an event

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with which they are as familiar as the people at the ringside.

But all this was supposed to concern a definite prospecting trip and not its side lights. The crew did not stay long at Rottenstone Lake; two weeks of investigation told it that the strike or two near the water seemed to be about the only available ones at the present time. Back came the airplanes and the men climbed into the cabin, this time to be transported to Reindeer Lake near the northeast corner of Saskatchewan, where they worked for a time on the establishment of a gas cache, after which they flew onward to Fond du lac at the northeast end of Lake Athabasca where more work of the same type was done. When the airplane came back again, it was with the word of a journey to Hudson Bay.

Out over the north they went, and to Churchill, the terminus of the Hudson Bay Railroad. Then cutting straight out over the bay, they hit for Belcher's Islands, and the investigation of the tremendous iron deposits which were supposed to exist there. When that job was over, the airplane returned.

Another time it was a trip deep into Ungava, again for iron ore, and when that was over, the men cut southward for Toronto, stayed there a few days

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and hit for Sioux Lookout. In a week from the time the crew left Ungava-land, it was far in the new gold regions of the Patricia district, working along the Pickle and Crow Lake regions, with a comfortable camp, and the knowledge that it still had a month or so left before freeze-up. The distance for that season was reckoned crudely at a minimum of six thousand miles!

A six-thousand-mile cruising capacity with conveniences, is vastly different from a three-hundred-mile area without them. And how soon one comes to expect those conveniences, once one knows they are available! In that quartette was Joe Brosso, who had fought the bush of Canada from the first day he struck Cobalt, twenty-three years ago. Rapids, pole-water, storm, fire, illness, he had known all these in his years of work to find the "*tres bon mine*." And he had never complained.

In fact, there was a time when it was Joe's capacity for suffering, his cheery grin and his power to fight the elements which carried a group of prospectors through one of the hardest trips in the North. It was in 1907, and the men had started from Latchford upon a winter prospecting trip up the Montreal River.

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It was the first time on snowshoes for some of them and the first time that year for Joe Brosso. Snowshoeing is like horseback riding; one must become toughened to it. Joe's feet seemed the most tender in the crowd. They began to crack. They bled, until the stain of his veins seeped through the triple covering of heavy woolen socks and even through his moccasins; his every step left its red imprint in the snow. Joe did not complain. The weather was steadily below zero; they had no tents, only a piece of canvas which they erected at night for a windbreak; they threw their eiderdowns into the shelter of that and slept like drugged men.

They were tired, for they were work horses. Every other man was dragging a toboggan loaded with supplies; their foreheads were scarred by the steady chafing of the tumplines. Stolid, dogged, they worked day after day, dragging those toboggans, or unloading them and portaging the materials over a rough, wind-swept place where they could not pull them. One man to the tumpline, pulling from ahead, one man behind with a pole, pushing — that was their life, hour after hour, through the short span of day and even onward when the moon shone or the flash of the Northern Lights gave enough illu-

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mination by which to proceed. It was a sixty-five-day journey, with a progress which sometimes ran as low as three or four miles a day. Joe Brosso's humor and his cheerfulness carried the whole party through many a period of tough sledding.

He had a hundred funny old songs which he had brought from Quebec. He could laugh easier than any man in the North. He deliberately twisted his French-Canadian dialect to make it seem more funny to his partners. He belittled the pain of his swollen feet; a shrug of the shoulders and a *Mon Dieu!* was all the evidence he gave of the anguish when he would strip the frozen, blood-crusts from their mocasins from them. For were they not adventurers of the *bon chance*? Were they not the *voyageurs par excellence*? *Voilà!* It was good to be alive in this crisp air, and to know that somewhere, far ahead, lay the bonanza!

Now, as the movie directors would say, the picture cuts to the shores of Crow Lake, last summer. Joe Brosso was there and Joe had seen a number of suspicious movements in a certain patch of lake weeds which indicated the presence of a tremendous pike. There were plenty of fish in easy catching distance, but Joe wanted that particular pike. One day

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when an airplane came in, Joe put in an order for a steel casting rod, a line, a reel and some pike plugs. The airplane came back without them. Joe patiently put in his order again. Once more the pilot forgot them. For a third time Joe put in his order and addressed it directly to Jack Hammell, and for a third time the airplane returned without that desired fishing pole.

"Jack said you could get along without that stuff," said the pilot. "You're supposed to be looking for gold, not pike."

"Ah!" Joe Brusso had blown up. "I can get along without them! *Mon Dieu!* And it has come to this! When you go back you tell Jack Hammell I shall have my fishing pole, or I shall know why! Does he expect a prospector to work away off out here in the bush without *any* conveniences?"

CHAPTER X

For a better understanding of what flying has done for the prospector in Canada, it must be remembered that until a year ago, the world of minerals in the North possessed an invisible deadline, beyond which all hope of metal wealth seemed impossible. Canadian prospecting has just found in the airplane a means of crossing that barrier into a fabulous land of riches.

Legend is heavy in the North; most of it concerns mineral wealth. When the first envoys of the Company of Gentleman Adventurers went into the Hudson Bay district centuries ago, every catch of furs was accompanied by the lore of strange lands where mountains of copper ore furnished practically every weapon and utensil used by the Northern Indian. There was even the tradition of an ancient woman conjurer who sat upon a mountain of copper somewhere far toward the Arctic, and who sank, year by year, into the ground, carrying the metal with her. Then there were the rumors of great fields of metal

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along the Coppermine River, gold in the gravel bars of the Thelon, beds of precious metals in Ungava; the historians of the Hudson's Bay Company recorded many such traditions. But of what use are riches if one cannot reach them?

Most of this legendary land of wealth lies north of Sixty, a line of latitude which until recently has acted by general understanding as a divisional point between the habitable portion of Canada and that country into which only fools, fur buyers and the Mounted Police could go. In setting that dividing line at Sixty the average person felt himself more than generous; it would be more sensible, thought most, to move it down to Fifty-five. Beyond that, progress into the wilderness, except in certain portions like the Peace River district, seemed beyond human capabilities. Now the airplane has zoomed along and in a few years changed such ideas considerably.

What will happen in the next five years, is of course, conjecture, but one must, naturally, gauge the future by the past. A year and a half ago, there was not a gasoline cache or an airplane base north of Fort Churchill. To-day, there are supply stations at Fort Harrison, Richmond Gulf, Great

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Whale and other points on the eastern shores of Hudson Bay; there's a radio station at Baker Lake, hundreds of miles northwest of Fort Churchill, and still hundreds of miles north of that, there's a supply base at Repulse Bay, at the very head of Hudson Bay. Out in the Northwest Territories, an airplane can drop down to Landing Lake and refuel any time it happens to get into the territory. The station wasn't there a year ago, the lake wasn't known, and it was named by Captain Oaks because it was a good place for airplanes to land.

Those are a few of the twenty-five stations established in a year by the Northern Aerial Mineral Exploration Limited which Jack Hammell commands. Another outfit, the Dominion Explorers, has dotted the vicinity of Chesterfield Inlet and Baker Lake with supply camps and gasoline stations for the use of airplanes in the exploration of the Barren Lands. There are still other bases, fostered by Cyril Knight Prospecting, Nipissing Mines, and others. This year, the job of investigating Canada by air swung into full force; what it will accomplish in the ultimate, no one knows; progress has been so rapid in the short life of aerial exploration that persons now hesitate to prophesy. The ones most surprised

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by what airplanes could accomplish were the very persons who insisted upon that method by which to pioneer.

Of course, the big things in the North will be accomplished by big companies, such as the two now in the field, the N. A. M. E. and the Dominion Explorers. Equipped with high-powered planes, hangars, supply bases, portable nose-sheds, a large personnel and all the rest of the necessities which go with a big company, they will be able to reach forth as they choose. But there is another element which also will play its part: the work of the "gypsy" air prospector and the junket airplane.

It seems that to exploration will be given the convenience of a taxicab of the air — I predict the time, and soon, when one can arrange to reach the most remote districts of the so-called Frozen North as easily as reservations now are made with any big railroad company for travel to ordinary communities. Nor will that work be done solely through large companies; in a few years, one will be able to choose his carrier as he now hires a motor car. Even now, such advertisements as the following are beginning to appear in Canadian mining papers:

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Flights anywhere south of the Transcontinental Railway in a radius of 150 miles from Amos, at the rate of \$40 per passenger flying hour. Flights north of the Transcontinental \$50 per hour for one passenger plane and \$125 per hour for four passenger plane.

Our Aircraft are Closed and Heated
Safe and Comfortable
Our Pilots Cool, Safe and Dependable.

Travel by the General Airways Plane and Save Days of Uncomfortable and Tedious Journey.

Which, as you can see, has a strange, reminiscent quality, remindful of a cruising car, edging toward a passenger on the curbing, while its driver leans forth with the pleading announcement:

“Taxi, Mister? Nice, clean, comfortable, heated cab, Mister!”

The record of one of these smaller exploration outfits, “Prospectors Airways Limited,” presents an excellent picture of what may be expected from many more of their kind within the next few years. In 1927, Robert Cockeram and Peter Graham, prospectors, were flown into Fort Hope, at the eastern edge of the new “gold ridge” running from Red Lake, Ontario, some two hundred and fifty miles toward Northern Quebec. All in a few hours they

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saw a journey accomplished that otherwise might have taken a month. So they began to think of a plane for themselves.

Neither could fly, but they knew some one who could, Glyn Burge, formerly a member of the British Air Force, and later one of the fliers operating into the mining camp of Rouyn. The necessary money was put up and Burge went to the States to take a course at the factory where the company's one plane was being built.

There was a reason for that course. Money was not over-abundant. If Burge could be both pilot and mechanic, that would mean the saving of one man's salary and a hundred and fifty pounds of continuous freight. Burge took his lessons and came forth with the plane. Prospectors Limited went into action on May 28, 1928.

It finished its first year in October, 1928. Burge, Cockeram and Graham during that time had flown into the Crow and Pickle Lake regions, they had cruised around Hudson Bay, they had looked over new mineral country near Favorable Lake in the Patricia district, they had been to The Pas in Northern Manitoba, and Cold Lake, farther north. They had dropped down to Reindeer Lake in northwest-

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ern Saskatchewan and moved from there to other lakes; they had cut back across Canada to Norway House, and from there to a trip around James Bay; then far onward to Haileybury, after which they had returned to Sioux Lookout, once more in the west. But about that time, there came the news of a new find at Cold Lake, hundreds of miles northwest. So they just jumped over there and staked a few claims before putting their plane up for the winter. And when their own prospecting requirements had been slack, of course there had been other passengers and freight to transport. When the year was done, the record of work included seventeen thousand miles of territory covered, three hundred and twenty-six passengers carried and thirty thousand five hundred pounds of freight transported without a mishap. There will be many such small companies in Canada as the years go by.

More than that, I have another prediction: that Canada will become the proving ground of the heavy, slow-flying freight carrier. The factor of flying safety is unusually great in Canada; humid air and plentiful landing places give an airplane a better chance than in most districts. The country which now is being investigated cannot be reached

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by railroads for years. But those who place their faith in airplanes insist that the lack of railroads will not halt them. If big enough mineral fields are found, the railroad will eventually reach them. But in the meantime, the necessities of progress will be carried on by the freighter, lumbering through the skies upon a job of pioneering in a country which until aviation began its work was not only feared but despised.

The Frozen North, as a land of mystery and impossibilities, is facing its end. In the first place, investigators have learned that the winters there are in many places, no more fierce than in districts which have known habitation for years, and that the summers are as warm as many spots even as far south as the upper Mississippi Valley. More than that, the greatest menace of all, the inaccessibility of the bush, has been conquered by going over instead of through it. Experienced aviators insist that the cost of air-freighting will be cut in a few years from four dollars a hundred pounds to less than a dollar, and that slow work-planes will be evolved that can carry every requirement of a mine's machinery. The lumbering prairie schooner broke the back of the West's resistance; the comparatively

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lumbering air-freighter will do the same for the vast reaches of the North.

Vastness is a vague word by which to describe the North. Specific instances only can delineate the land, especially when it is remembered that an outstanding instance of terrific distances covered represent only a small part of the region into which the airplane is breaking its way. There's the flight of Clennel (Punch) Dickens, for instance.

In all the history of Canada, one place has stood forth as the most bitter of all districts; Death has lurked there eternally. It is "The Barrens." There's a saying in Canada that a Northman can whip his weight in wildcats, or pack twice his weight on a portage; he can fight fire and muskeg and white water, but that he bows to one thing, the Barrens.

Seemingly endless, weird, unclothed by vegetation, this tremendous area of rocky waste stretches westward from Hudson Bay in a constant lure to the prospector. There are bleak hills, as raw as the day the glaciers left them, thunderous waterfalls, and lakes, one seeping into the other. There are ragged, low stretches where nothing grows but lichens and mosses, tiny Alpine flowers, a form of heather, and stunted willows, reaching a height of about six

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inches, then spreading close to the ground, like the creeping junipers that one finds at timber line in the Rockies. And that is all. It is the Barrens in everything that the name implies; there is no fuel; the prospector who goes into it must carry an oil stove or forego fire. There is no shelter. There is no means of locomotion save walking, or a precarious progress against the swift currents of the rivers; a recent effort to invade the recesses of the Thelon River resulted in a progress of only a few miles an hour even with a "kicker," or outboard motor; paddles were comparatively useless against the current. The last party which strove to invade this forbidding area by ordinary methods left Edmonton, Alberta, in 1927, by dog team, canoe and pack to "beat the Barrens or die." Last autumn, far in the North, another group of prospectors found a cabin in which were three skeletons; and the Barrens remained unbeaten. But one day, Punch Dickens with three passengers tried it by airplane. More is known to-day of the Barrens from a prospecting standpoint as the result of that trip than in all the years of history. Yet it was accomplished in forty hours of flying!

It was historic flying, however. Dickens is a pilot

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for Western Canada Airways; his flight was for the Dominion Explorers. It consisted of a trip from Winnipeg north to Fort Churchill, then still farther north to Chesterfield Inlet, west to Baker Lake, south and west to the Great Slave River, back across Lake Athabaska and to Winnipeg again. That forms only a small segment of the Great North. The distance covered, however, was nearly four thousand miles. For two thousand miles of that distance, the plane moved over country where there was not a tree to break the monotony of endless rock. There were stretches of two hundred miles at a time where the only things to be seen were bare rock and water; there were not even the lichens, the heather and the small Arctic plants that one notices about Hudson Bay — nothing but rock, the black Pre-Cambrian, broken by stretches of quartz or gossan, or by the pitted, somber lakes, set in a mounting of rock without a shred of vegetation to soften their ragged contours. Yet that is the country whence the greatest riches yet known may come; one can see veins from the air, or at least the indications which tell a prospector that here lies territory which should yield mineral wealth. But the man who goes there must carry every necessary supply, even to oil, or coal at

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a hundred dollars a ton. That is why the Barrens will yield to only one conqueror, the airplane.

Naturally, the conquest can be accomplished only by campaigns as carefully planned as that of human warfare; the exploration companies in Canada today are strangely reminiscent of combat units. Perhaps the fact that many of the aviators saw service during the World War forms a reason for the system of attack; more probably, however, the cause lies in the enemy to be conquered. Airplane exploration companies do not work upon a haphazard basis.

First of all, there is of course, a central base, and after this, district bases; they stretch all the way from the well-populated areas along the Transcontinental line of steel to Richmond Gulf, and Baker Lake, far north of Sixty, on the shores of Hudson Bay.

The procedure is the same in each district, the camp working under an engineer who forms the commanding officer. Under him, each in charge of a division, is the field engineer, the senior pilot, in command of all aerial operations, and the chief clerk who commands the records and moving of supplies.

This is the commanding organization. Where a

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country has been visited by geologists, the preliminary plans are made according to government maps, eliminating all districts in which the geological formations are not conducive to mineral deposits.

But Canada has not been wholly explored geologically. Therefore, the airplane company of to-day is a pioneer even in the mapping and cataloguing of a new country. For where geologists have not gone for the government, they now go as employees of a private corporation, to reconnoiter vast districts, divide it into the barren class or that containing potentialities of minerals, map it or sketch it from the air; after that is done, the work of digging out its secrets is left to the prospectors.

The strange thing is that all this is being done more cheaply with expensive airplanes, highly paid geologists, salaried prospectors, supply bases, heads of departments and central offices, than it was done in the old days, when a prospector obtained a grubstake and underwent every possible hardship and privation in his hope of finding a mine. When one thinks of paying one hundred and twenty-five dollars an hour for a four-passenger airplane, it naturally seems an expensive means of fighting the bush. But when one considers that this represents

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the saving of months of effort and hardship, the price actually becomes cheap. To-day, a prospector can go where he desires by airplane, put in two months' more work than he ever was able to do before, and actually save money on the season.

More than that, because of the airplane, mines may be found in places where men have gone many times before and searched in vain. The reason is that the best two months of the year for prospecting have been those which have heretofore been barred to the bushman, — April and May, before the leaves have come out on the trees and when the ground is still free from the foliage of heavy undergrowth. One must know Canadian bush to appreciate its denseness; when a country becomes so tangled in the deep months of summer that persons often lose sight of each other within ten feet, it is easy to see why a searcher may miss a vein which in more denuded territory might readily yield itself as a producer of millions. These two months in the spring, and later activities in the autumn when the same conditions prevail, will take away the blindfold under which the prospector has labored, and allow him truly to see the country in which he has chosen to work.

In fact, the airplane, all in a year, has revolu-

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tionized prospecting and metamorphosed the prospector; it has even changed the status of those who do not work by airplane and who never will, because it has elevated the entire vocation. Time was when the prospector as a class was looked upon as little more than a respectable tramp, a "bush hobo." He was anybody's meat who desired to carve him. Extraordinarily naïve, he formed a constant target for the unscrupulous. Put him on a trail and he had all the cunning of an Indian. Put him in the city and he possessed the bovine qualities of a steer being led to slaughter; stage and fiction have not overdrawn him as a "character."

Nor can all the airplanes in the world entirely eliminate this sort of character from the world of prospecting. There will always be the grubstaker and the lone wolf, the fellow who doesn't want help; the man with a secret. His number, however, will grow smaller year by year. The prospector has had a long, hard fight; he has been a true pioneer, and now that help and square dealing have come to his assistance, he's more than ready to receive it.

The men who are working for the various aerial exploration companies — there will be a score of such big outfits in a few years more — receive as a

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general rule, a salary of one hundred and fifty dollars a month and ten per cent. of everything they find. This means that they are furnished a salary for something they love to do, together with their transportation, their grub and their supplies. More than that, for the first time in history, they now have real protection on a discovery. Fleecing prospectors has been an entertaining game for many years. The new percentage method of working for big companies will do much to end that.

In the old days, for instance, a prospector's troubles really just began after he had given years of his life to hardship and danger that he might find a mine. The prospector then had the job of getting a decent return on it. That was often difficult.

There was the "send touch" for instance, of which he knew little, but which he often must encounter nevertheless. The stock brokers or capitalists whom he selected as a possible purchaser weren't in a position right then to pay the amount of money he wanted, but, being friendly souls, they knew some one who might be interested and to whom they could send him. So the name and address was given and the prospector started on his way. Once he was out of the office, there would be a hasty telephone call.

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"Put him over the hurdles," would be the command. Then the prospector would arrive, with his samples, at the office of the "send." Yes, they were interesting samples, and it looked like a good mine. Of course, it was a long way from the railroad and there'd be a lot of difficulties, but they might be interested if the price were right. Whereupon the price would be named, and about that time the operation of being sent over the hurdles began. There would be a hurry call for File 363B, and the possible purchaser, once it was brought to his desk, would display it.

"I'm not running down your property, understand," he would say. "But I just want to show you something. You want a quarter of a million dollars for your mine. Your prices are all wrong. Look at this proposition that has just been offered to us out in Nevada. Three times the ore that you've got, twice the values, only five miles from a railroad in country where there's every convenience. And they only want one fifth of what you're asking!"

Thus would a jockeying system begin, in which the prospector would be sent from one firm to another, each beating down his price, until, disheartened, he would sell out for what he could get. I have

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known men to part with mines worth millions for little more than it cost them to do the development work. And I know, too, of one prospector who was engineered into a fight, arrested on complaint of a person whom he thought was a stranger, held in jail and finally released only when he sacrificed his mine to a supposed Good Samaritan to get the money with which to pay off a violent accuser, who had threatened to charge him with attempted murder. The annals of mining are crammed with such incidents.

The entrance of big companies into active prospecting will end a great deal of this. When a man makes his find, the company is there to develop it. If the mine pays, the prospector gets his percentage; in the meanwhile, he has been paid a living wage. More mines will be found for that reason, because prospectors can spend all their time hunting for minerals instead of being forced into the job of attempting to sell their properties, a job which not one in a hundred knows. For this, the airplane is directly responsible.

There is another reason for the intense faith which Canadian mining men have in airplanes. This is the fact that work can now be continuous

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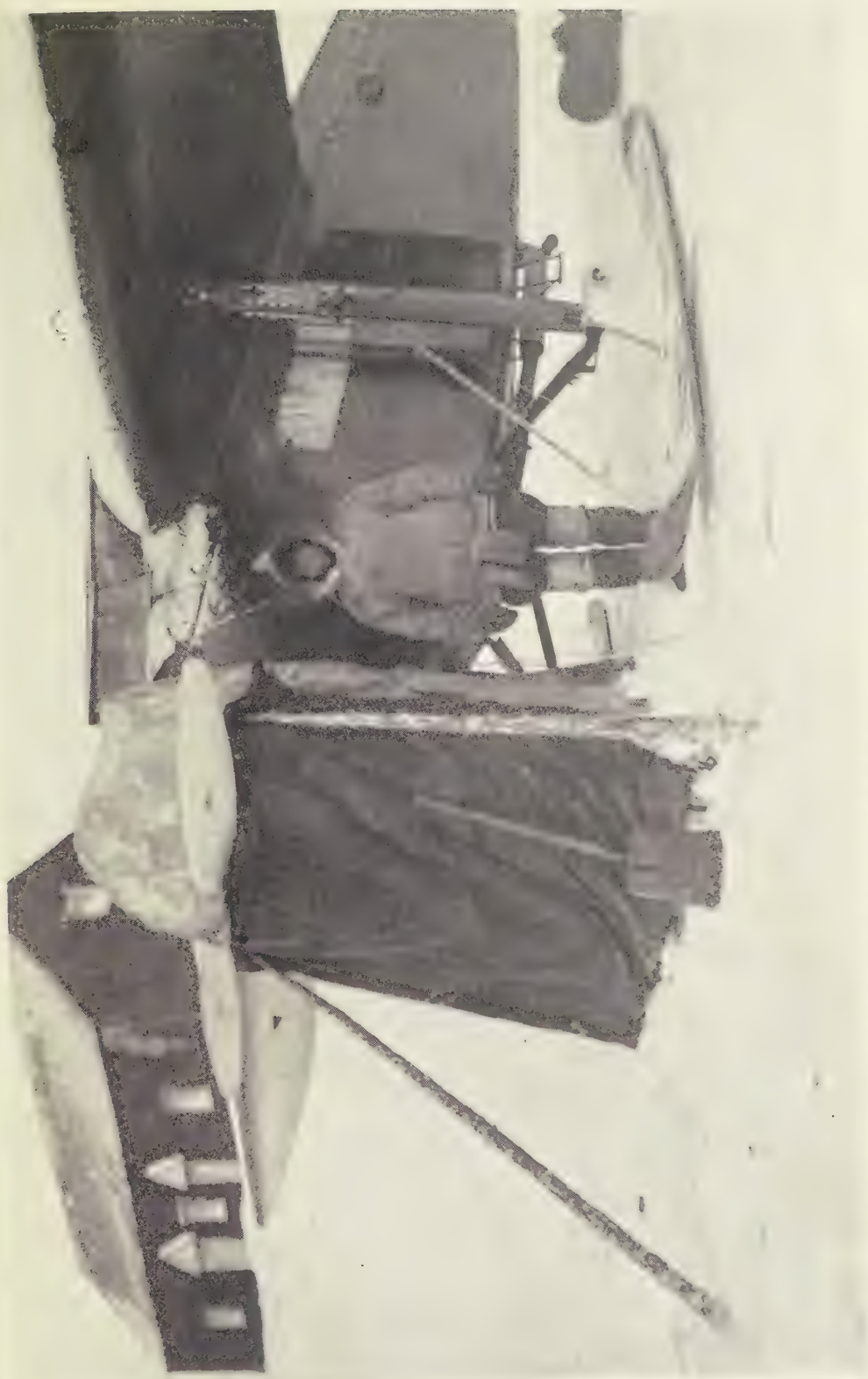
throughout the year. Fliers of the North have proven that airplanes, after all, are far from fragile things. Last winter, four pilots, Captain Oaks, Pat Reid, H. A. Mews and Ken Murray, with a Wasp Fokker and a Wasp Fairchild, started forth for Richmond Gulf, far north on the eastern shore of Hudson Bay, to bring out some prospectors who had finished their work. It was the most dangerous trip ever attempted in Canada, a straight defiance of sub-Arctic winter by the airplane.

The two ships fought white squalls, they were held up by blizzards, they flew in weather so thick that they passed directly over Rupert House at the south end of James Bay without even seeing it; they were marooned in the cabin of their planes while a sixty-mile-an-hour gale screamed about them, and the hummocked ice of Hudson Bay cracked with the reverberations of a thousand shotguns. They flew their ships in weather that averaged forty degrees below zero, they made forced landings on fields of snow, with no knowledge of what rocks lay just beneath the surface to wash out their landing gears. For two thousand miles this continued, with eight hundred of it along the forbidding, windswept shores of Hudson Bay. Several times the men were

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forced to wait out storms, raging so fiercely that humans could barely stand against the wind; the pilots built shelters of snow blocks, Eskimo fashion, and wrapped the engines of their airplanes in eiderdown, heating the oil by means of a blow-torch in order to warm the blocks sufficiently for starting purposes.

But they made the journey; and more than that, they carried a honeymoon couple, a missionary and his wife, to their new home, delivering them to their post in days instead of weeks. They delivered the mail to every Hudson's Bay station along the line; once the trip by dog team from the landing place to the settlement consumed almost as much time as the airplane's flight from civilization. They made notes on the country, picked up their men, and in a day and a half, with fair weather again prevailing, made the trip back to civilization. Altogether, in less than two weeks, most of which time was consumed in waiting out bad weather, these four men accomplished with comparative ease what never before had been done in less than three months of terrific hardship. And that, said the pilots when they had returned with their cargo of prospectors from Richmond Gulf, was just an experiment. It was fun, they added.



HEATING ENGINE AT GREAT WHALE RIVER. EIDERDOWN
USED TO BREAK STRONG WIND

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These are men with adventure in their souls, these aviators who are piloting the ships of the North. Many of them have war records. "Doc" Oaks possesses a medal presented him by the Dominion of Canada for outstanding achievements in flying. C. A. (Duke) Schiller is the man who made the flight to Greenly Island to rescue the Bremen fliers. T. M. (Pat) Reid did his bit in the War by flying the North Sea Patrol. J. D. Vance was one of the pilots of the four Handley-Paiges which made a record flight from England to Egypt. The list goes on endlessly; men with records of achievement, men with adventure in their souls. They are trail breakers, frontier busters, as important to the era in which they live as Jim Bridger, Kit Carson or the speeding riders of the Pony Express.

Moreover, they love it. There are no theatrics when a crowd of aviators gathers and begins to talk over the events of a season's flying. The achievements drop into the background; it's the fun of the thing that counts, the thrill and the sport of it. For instance, W. J. McDonough made a record last summer, by a solo flight over one thousand six hundred miles of wilderness he never before had traversed. But when the gang talks about it, there's a lot

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of laughter — because behind that record is a story that's terribly funny to the flying crowd.

McDonough, so the gang says, was a bit raw when he first came into exploration service. He'd been in the Royal Flying Corps and the Royal Air Force during the War, and following that, he'd kept himself in trim by entering a few of the King's Cup Races. Then he had come to Canada and gotten a job with the Northern Aerial Mineral Exploration. According to Doc Oaks, it took him half the summer to wobble a plane across Ontario; he lit on every lake to find out where he was. At last he reached Winnipeg and liked it. In fact, he liked it so much that one day Jack Hammell sent him a telegram. It must have been forceful. Captain McDonough jumped into his plane and was in Fort Simpson, sixteen hundred miles away, deep in the Northwest Territories, in two and a half days. Then he taxied his plane to a landing and smiled joyfully at Doc Oaks, who was awaiting him.

"Came right straight across!" he announced. "Just about a record, too!"

"What's the idea?" asked Doc sourly. "Burning up a good plane like that!"

Doc had received a private wireless from Jack

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Hammell. It had said something about toughening up a new man.

So Captain McDonough was turned over to the gentle tutoring of a pilot whom Jack calls Gorilla Bob, because he has the strength of one, and about twice the daring. Likewise, the word was passed along:

“Toughen him up!”

They were out in the Nahanni River country in the southwestern portion of the Northwest Territories. It was land where white men had never before traveled. There were mountains to cross, fifty and sixty miles of “dry hops” where the planes must reach an elevation of ten thousand feet before they could hope to skim over the summits. Landing places were where one found them; a favorite one was upon the river itself, which possessed a mean current of three miles an hour. There were spots where fogs shut down on the flier, forcing him to travel according to instinct and dumb luck. There was a canyon which seemed to suck an airplane into it, causing as much necessity for nicety in flying as that demanded of a New York taxi-driver. Captain McDonough endured it all — and said nothing.

The Nahanni work was finished. Gorilla Bob and

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Captain McDonough brought a plane across to Churchill, on Hudson Bay. There was no place to moor it, and an eight-foot rip tide was running. They threw out the anchor, meanwhile watching it drag, and then prepared to wait out the night. Hours passed; a pontoon began to leak. The ship was in danger of sinking.

"We'll have to throw off this radio apparatus," yelled Gorilla Bob. "Got to lighten 'er up! She's sinking on us!"

"We'll throw off nothing!" snapped Captain McDonough.

"But the ship's going to sink!"

"Let 'er sink!"

"Not with me," said Bob. "We've got to swim ashore."

"Do we?" asked the Captain. "You know what'll happen, if you ever hit that water? You'll cramp and die before you've gone fifty feet."

Growling and snapping at each other, they stuck out the night. They were wet, they were cold, they were in danger. Toward dawn, Gorilla Bob once more mentioned tossing that radio apparatus into the hungry tide.

"We'll throw off nothing!" came the reply.

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The gray, miserable morning arrived. Out of the mists a vague form appeared, a tug coming to their assistance. As it steamed closer, McDonough grinned and extended a hand toward his partner.

"Am I tough enough now?" he asked.

Thus is completed a cycle of heroism — the aerial invasion of the North is wholly that in its every phase, from the prospector who first finds the vein of ore to the laborer who fights flies and heat in summer, loneliness and zero weather in the winter to sink the shaft that will convert a prospect into a paying mine. It isn't the money that makes them do it, it's something finer, something greater than money; it's a spirit of To-morrow, the ability to see things to which other persons are blind, to build, at first mentally and then in actuality, a driving force which sends them on, to many dangers and few glories, but to the satisfaction which only a pioneer can understand.

So goes the North. One has a different feeling there from most places. One realizes that one is not among humdrum persons, but that every one is a source of drama and story value, even the Finns and Danes and Swedes, huddled over their drinks in the beer parlors. For they are only there on holiday;

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after the headache, they will face the North again, stalwart once more, going forth upon the battle to beat the frontier.

There's a thrill in that desire, even for the man on the side lines. To beat the frontier or to see it beaten! One learns quickly in the North Country just what that means; one has there the scenes which make realization easy; the armylike migrations of workingmen, their packs upon their backs, the thrum of the airplane, the crash and roar of monstrous machinery, the scarlike stretches of new road-bed stretching into what, only a short time before, was the wilderness. Or, in greater measure, when one sees the actual march of civilization, such as the following:

The freeze-up was on, far in the North. Like the clutch of a giant hand it had descended, congealing lakes, solidifying the mushy muskeg, and driving the primary snow of the year across the stunted Barrens like the lash of a whip of ermine. We had been out beyond the end of the Hudson Bay steel, on a "visit" to the camp of some aviators at Deer Lake. Now Evan David, a friend, G. Claude S. Johnston, and myself were returning, our rubber-shielded moccasins serrated with white, our parkas frozen, our



THE PIONEER TRACK-LAYER AT WORK



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bodies bent against the blast as we stumbled along the uncertain footing of the corduroyed right of way. Faintly, through the storm, there showed in the distance, a tremendous apparatus, strangely like a giant spider, which moved its tentacles slowly, and crawled toward us, accompanied by gray smudges which we knew were men.

It was the pioneer track layer of the Hudson Bay line, laying steel as though there were no storm to hamper. A strangely animated thing, this track layer, a combination of trams and lifts and cranes and adjustable hoists, it stood at the head of a string of freight cars, behind which was a work-engine, which moved it forward at the rising and dropping of a signal flag. Out of a tram at the right, there poured ceaseless ties, to be carried on the backs of snow-cruised men to their position on the corduroy. At the left, another tram spewed forth the rails, to be caught in the tongs of husky laborers, and guided into position as the hoist lowered them to the ties. Then came the thudding of the pickaroons as other workmen straightened the ties to the call of the lineman, far ahead, holding the rail steady to the survey stakes that would guide it to Hudson Bay. Coincidentally, there was the grinding of steel

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upon steel; the angle bars were being affixed now to make a mere piece of rail an integral part of a five-hundred-mile railroad.

Then the "goosenecks" were affixed for the proper spacing, and the clattering of metallic blows began as the sledge gang fastened the steel to its wooden foundation. And after that a flag signalled from the engine house of the track-layer. Far in the rear, the work-engine whistled a reply and the track-layer moved forward upon the foundation which it just had laid.

It was a queer progression, necessarily slow because of the instability of a rawly new roadbed. As the pioneer moved, so moved the workmen, in lines of single file, their steps measured, like the pace of pall-bearers. And the throbbing roar of the storm, rushing over the Barrens, seemed to transmute itself to something more; as though it were an orchestra of the elements, moaning the measured bars of the Funeral March from Saul.

Stop and halt, stop and halt, and with the progression ever that measured tread, as heads down against the storm, arms limp against their thighs, brute-strong men walked forward before the monster that was devouring a frontier. We stopped for a

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moment to chat with grinning, snow-splotched Mike O'Shea, the foreman of the track gang, as he extolled the merits of his new muskrat cap and explained just how he'd gotten that big steam burn on his right cheek bone. But suddenly, as if we had been called, the three of us looked up.

We had lived a generation in a half hour. When we had halted for our talk with Mike, we had been in the wilderness. But as jokes and conversation had passed between us, a miracle had happened. We had not moved from our stopping point. But where we now stood, was no longer the frontier.

It was civilization — the civilization of steam and rail and communication, where trains would run, and telegraph lines connect one with the world. Where commerce would travel and safety lie, the safety that no one ever quite knows beyond the end of steel.

We had merely stood and talked. But that giant, spidery, voracious thing had continued to move upon its measured, even pace. And now it was far before us, with the new track shining behind it, and men were again treading slowly forward, upon a march of civilization and a funeral of another frontier.

THE END

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